

**Immigration in Parliamentary Discourse:
Critical Discourse Analysis of British Parliamentary Debates before and
after the General Election of 2015**

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Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa tutkin, miten Yhdistyneen kuningaskunnan parlamentissa puhuttiin eri maahanmuuttajaryhmistä ennen ja jälkeen vuoden 2015 eduskuntavaalien. Tutkimuksen kohteena ovat parlamentin alahuoneen väittelyt noin kaksi kuukautta ennen ja jälkeen vaalien. Tavoitteenani on selvittää millaisia sanoja eri maahanmuuttotermeihin yhdistettiin ja millaisia rooleja eri maahanmuuttajaryhmille väittelyissä annettiin. Tässä tutkimuksessa eriteltyt ryhmät ovat maahanmuuttajat (*immigrants*), turvapaikanhakijat (*asylum seekers*) ja pakolaiset (*refugees*).

Vuonna 2015 Eurooppaan saapui poikkeuksellisen suuri määrä pakolaisia ja turvapaikanhakijoita, mikä herätti paljon keskustelua eri Euroopan maiden maahanmuuttopolitiikoista sekä siitä, kuinka paljon kunkin maan tulisi pakolaisia ottaa ja keille turvapaikka tulisi myöntää. Yhdistyneen kuningaskunnan vuoden 2015 eduskuntavaaleissa maahanmuutto oli yksi tärkeimmistä teemoista.

Tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen muodostavat kriittinen diskurssianalyysi ja korpustutkimus, jotka yhdistämällä on mahdollista kriittisesti tutkia suuriakin aineistoja. Kriittisen diskurssianalyysin mallina käytän erityisesti Teun van Dijkin teorioita ja tutkimuksia eliitti- ja rasistisesta diskurssista (1993; 1997; 2000). Korpustutkimuksen ja diskurssianalyysin yhdistämisen teoriapohjana tässä tutkimuksessa käytetään Paul Bakerin (2006) kehittämiä malleja.

Kokoan tutkimuksen aineistosta kaksi korpusta, joita analysoin ja vertailen käyttämällä korpustyökalua. Tutkimuksen analyysiosio on kaksiosainen: ensimmäisessä osassa keskityn maahanmuuttotermien kollokaatteihin, joita analysoidaan siitä näkökulmasta, millaisia merkityksiä ne semanttisen prosodian vuoksi mahdollisesti liittävät tutkittuihin termeihin. Analyysin jälkimmäisessä osassa analysoin maahanmuuttajaryhmiin liitettyjä verbejä, joiden avulla selvitän, millaisissa toimijarooleissa ja millaisen toiminnan kohteena eri ryhmät on väittelyissä esitetty olevan.

Tutkimus osoitti, että eri maahanmuuttajaryhmiä kohdeltiin väittelyissä hyvin eri tavalla. Pakolaisista puhuttiin positiivisimpaan sävyyn, kun taas niin sanotusti vain parempaa elämää hakevista maahanmuuttajista puhuttiin melko negatiiviseen sävyyn. Maahanmuuton kontrolloimisesta ja tulijoiden käsittelystä puhuttiin erityisen paljon.

Avainsanat: maahanmuutto, poliittinen diskurssi, kriittinen diskurssianalyysi, korpus, väittelyt

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1 Introduction

The year 2015 was very exceptional in that the number of asylum seekers traveling to the European Union (EU) was exceptionally high. Compared with the number of asylum applicants in 2014 (626,960), the number more than doubled in 2015 (1,321,600) (Eurostat 2016a). In the United Kingdom (UK) the change was not that dramatic, since in 2014 there were 32,785 people seeking asylum in the UK, and 38,800 in 2015 (ibid.). The most significant reason for the rise in the number of asylum applicants in the EU was the civil war in Syria, but also the violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, abuses in Eritrea and poverty in Kosovo led people to leave their home countries (BBC News 2016a).

Recently inside the European Union there has been discussion on the role of the EU, and on the importance of the Schengen Agreement (more on the EU and the Schengen Agreement in section 2.1). Furthermore, in the national parliaments of many member states as well as among the people, there has been a great deal of discussion on whether they have done too much or too little to help the people fleeing their home countries compared to the other member states. The issue has remained a daily topic in the European media and in the national parliaments of the member states since the summer 2015.

In everyday use, the terms *asylum seeker*, *refugee* and *immigrant* are often confused. According to the definition given by the UN Refugee Agency, a *refugee* is a person who is fleeing armed conflict or persecution (UNHCR 2016), and an *asylum seeker* is someone who has applied for asylum and says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been evaluated (Internet Source 1). *Immigrant* is someone who has come to live in a foreign country (Oxford Dictionaries 2016), usually voluntarily.

In my thesis I study British parliamentary debates before and after the general election of 2015. My main aim is to find out how immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees were talked about in the parliamentary debates. This is studied by using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and the theoretical framework is provided by critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. The study belongs

to the field of applied linguistics, which is a broad field concentrating on problems in which language is involved (Cook 2003, 5). The field is especially concerned with “the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world”, as pointed out by Cook (ibid.).

Studying the presentation of refugees and asylum seekers in the British parliamentary debates is important at least for three reasons: 1) refugees and asylum seekers are groups that are relatively powerless in society (Baker 2006, 73); 2) the parliament in the United Kingdom has legislative power (Internet Source 3), which means that the decisions made in the parliament can directly influence the lives of refugees and asylum seekers; 3) political discourse reflects and influences public opinion (van Dijk 1993, 50). The main aim of making the representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the speeches of politicians visible (and perhaps the aim of all critical discourse analysis) is to make language users conscious of the type of language use that is at least partly responsible for social inequalities in society.

My study has two parts. First, I will conduct a corpus study on the debates before and after the election. The corpus study will focus on keywords and collocations. I will compare the results of the two periods, and I will try to find out whether there is an overall change in the way immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees are represented in the speeches of the Members of the Parliament (MPs) between the two periods. Second, I will study the verb phrases that are used in relation to the different immigrant groups. The aim is to find out whether the different groups are active or merely objects of the actions of others. I will also study what types of actions these groups perform themselves and what types of actions they are object to, using the terms provided by systemic functional grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

By analysing the debates, I seek to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How are immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers treated in the parliamentary debates?

- 2) What types of associations do the words related to migration have in the debates, and what types of roles are different migrant groups given?

In the next section, I present the relevant context of the study. First, I briefly describe the political situation in the European Union in 2015, concentrating on how the rise in the number of asylum seekers affected the political atmosphere and the role of the European Union. Second, I introduce the political system in the UK and the role and the structure of the debates. I also touch on what kinds of effect the rise in the number of asylum seekers in Europe has had in the UK. In the third section I present the theoretical framework of the study, which consists of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. After this, in section 4, the data and methods used in the analysis are introduced, which is followed by the results of the analysis and discussion.

2 Background

In this section, I first briefly describe the political situation in the European Union and how the rise in the number of asylum seekers coming to Europe affected the discussion about the Schengen Agreement, and the role of the European Union in general. Then I move on to introduce the political system in the UK, the results of the general election of 2015, and also the function of parliamentary debates in the UK.

2.1 The European Union and Immigration in 2015

According to the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the number of asylum seekers coming to the EU has steadily increased since 2008 (Sabbati, Poptcheva and Saliba 2015, 1). In 2014, the number of asylum applicants increased substantially, especially from Syria, Ukraine, Kosovo, Eritrea and Iraq (ibid.), and in 2015 the number more than doubled, as there were 1,255,600 first time asylum applicants in the EU (Eurostat 2016b, 1).

Most of the EU member states have signed the Schengen Agreement and are thus part of the Schengen Area. The Schengen Agreement took effect in 1995, and it abolished many of the EU's internal

borders and created a single external border (BBC News 2016b). The Agreement also includes common rules of asylum, cooperation between police services, a common list of countries whose nationals require visas, the Schengen Information System (SIS), and cooperation between member states in fighting drug-related crime (ibid.). Of the 28 EU member states, six are outside the Schengen zone – Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the UK (ibid.).

The Schengen Agreement has been criticized of offering an open door for migrants and criminals, and after the terrorist attacks against European countries in recent years (e.g. Paris, November 2015; Brussels, March 2016), there has been quite a lot of discussion on the necessity to re-impose national border controls. Furthermore, the increase in the number of asylum applicants and migrants has also increased the pressure on national politicians, and some EU states in the Schengen zone have already started to guard their borders again.

The Dublin Regulation, another law signed by the EU states that is important to remember when discussing asylum seekers and refugees, determines which member state is responsible for an application for asylum (Sabbati, Poptcheva and Saliba 2015, 1). According to the Dublin Regulation, the first member state an asylum seeker enters is responsible for examining the application (Poptcheva 2015, 4). Thus, an asylum seeker who moves to another member state can be transferred back to the member state at the EU's external borders (ibid.). The purpose of the Dublin Regulation was to avoid the phenomenon of "refugees in orbit", i.e. asylum seekers for which no state takes responsibility, and to prevent asylum seekers from making multiple applications (Sabbati, Poptcheva and Saliba 2015, 3). However, as a consequence of the Regulation, some member states' asylum systems are overloaded, which is said to lead to violations of the human rights of asylum seekers (Poptcheva 2015, 4). This is partly because many of the countries at the external borders were the ones that were hit the hardest by the economic crisis in the EU, and their budgets for migration and asylum issues have not kept up with the growing demands

(Park 2015). In practice, many of these countries have stopped enforcing the Regulation and allow migrants to pass through to other countries (ibid.).

The UK has opted out of the Schengen Agreement, but it has signed the Dublin Regulation (BBC News 2016b). It is taking part in the Schengen Information System (SIS), but it has wanted to maintain its own borders (ibid.). Even though the UK has maintained its own borders, the decisions made in the European Parliament affect its immigration policies, which was one of the major reasons the people wanted to have a referendum on the EU membership.

2.2 The Political System in the UK and the Major Political Issues in 2015

The British Parliament consists of two houses: the House of Commons (the lower house) and the House of Lords (the upper house) (Norton 2013, 16–17). The parliament is generally defined in terms of the House of Commons, which is the elected chamber, while the House of Lords is unelected and the membership to this house is for life in most cases (ibid.). The House of Lords is subordinate to the House of Commons, and in the event of conflict between the two houses, the House of Commons can eventually have its way (ibid., 17).

Nearly all the Members of Parliament represent political parties and most are members of one of the two main parties: Conservative Party or Labour Party (Internet Source 4). The general elections take place every five years, and during an election, every person entitled to vote can select one candidate in their constituency (650 areas) to be their MP (ibid.). The candidate who gets the most votes becomes the MP for that area until the next election (ibid.). The party with the most MPs after a general election usually forms the government, while the next largest party becomes the official Opposition (Internet Source 5). Since 1945, either the Conservative Party or the Labour Party has held power (Internet Source 6). In the 2015 general election, which was held on 7 May, (Hawkings, Keen and Nakatudde 2015, 83), the Conservatives polled 36.8 per cent of the vote and won 330 seats, while the Labour Party polled 30.4 per cent of the vote and won 232 seats (ibid. 5). The Conservative Party won an overall majority (51 %

of the total) (ibid., 26), which was their first since 1992 (ibid., 7). David Cameron, the Leader of the Conservative Party since 2005, became the Prime Minister after the 2010 general election, and was re-elected in the 2015 general election.

The British Parliament is no longer the only legislature in the UK, since a substantial body of law now derives from the European legislation (Norton 2013, 111). The UK became a member of the European Community (EC) on 1 January 1973, and because of the membership many policy-making competences were transferred to the institutions of the EC (ibid., 152). The Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1991 and it turned the EC into the European Union, paving way for the monetary union and a joint social policy, on both of which the UK negotiated an optout (BBC News 2007). The two major parties, Conservative and Labour, have been divided on the issue of the membership and changing their stance towards further integration since the issue came on the political agenda (ibid.), and the public have also felt that too much power has been transferred from the national parliament to Brussels (Wright and Cooper 2016).

Before the general election of 2015, the Prime Minister had promised to hold a referendum on the EU membership, if the Conservatives won the election (BBC News 2013). The EU referendum (also called the Brexit referendum) was held on 23 June 2016, and the UK voted to leave the European Union.

One of the crucial issues in the discussion on the EU and the membership was immigration, especially the EU migrants. The EU migrants (i.e. the people living in an EU country who are citizens of another EU country) enjoy free movement within the European Union, which means that the UK Government have no right to limit the immigration under the EU law (The Migration Observatory 2012). Despite the fact that the UK is not part of the Schengen Agreement and it is exempted from the EU asylum policy, a part of the British public have for a long time felt that the country cannot control immigration from inside the EU, or outside the EU. Together with the EU referendum and the general election, immigration was one of the major political issues in the UK in 2015.

In the next section, I present the theoretical framework for the study, which consists of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics.

3 Theoretical Framework

In this section, the theoretical framework of the study is presented. The theoretical framework consists of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. Also, the theory of transitivity provided by systemic functional grammar is used when analysing the verb phrases. In addition to presenting the relevant theory, I also introduce some related previous work in the field of applied linguistics.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and Transitivity

Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) is an approach to the study of text and talk that especially focuses on the relations between language and society, and language and power (Wodak 2001, 2). CDA takes an explicitly critical stance of studying text and talk, and the purpose is to reveal characteristics of a discourse that are hidden or implicit, the main focus usually being on relations of power, dominance and inequality (van Dijk 1995, 17–18). CDA was chosen as the main theoretical basis for the current thesis, because a critical stance towards political discourse can reveal issues that could otherwise go unnoticed. In addition, political discourse is always about power or power relations, and revealing power relations in discourse is one of the main goals of CDA.

CDA is difficult to define, since it includes a great number of different approaches and it can be used in many different disciplines in the humanities and in social sciences, not just in linguistics. Critical Linguistics (CL), which has many similarities with CDA, emerged in the late 1970s, and the term “critical” referring to a certain approach to the study of language was first used by Fowler, Kress, Hodge and Trew in *Language and Control* (1979) (Seidlhofer 2003, 127). They argued that language structure and social structure have a strong connection, and that language can be used to control the behaviour of other people (Fowler et al. 1979, 26). According to Wodak and Meyer (2009, 3), CDA as a network of

scholars emerged in the early 1990s. Today, the terms *critical discourse analysis* and *critical linguistics* are often used interchangeably, but recently CDA has been preferred and it is often being used instead of the term *critical linguistics* (ibid., 1).

Critical discourse analysis is related to the general discourse analysis, and it is said that CDA is discourse analysis “with an attitude” (van Dijk 2001, 96). The term *discourse* has almost as many definitions as there are the ones that try to define the term. For some scholars, *discourse* refers to spoken language, and *text*, on the contrary, to written language (Virtanen 1990, 447). For others discourse is language in use, spoken or written, and the analysis of discourse is the analysis of language in context (Brown and Yule 1983, 1). Following the definition offered by Brown and Yule (ibid.), the aim of discourse analysis is to investigate what language is used for, which means that linguistic forms cannot be studied independently, out of context. Thus, discourse analysts study the purposes and functions those forms are designed to serve in human affairs (ibid.). In the current thesis, the data consist of parliamentary debates, which is a very special kind of discourse for instance in that the speaking time is controlled and often the speeches have been prepared and written beforehand (van Dijk 2000, 99). In the parliament, there is also a clear polarisation between the government and the opposition speakers (ibid.). This context needs to be taken into account in the analysis.

Two basic concepts that are central to CDA are *ideology* and *power*. CDA typically aims at “unmasking ideologies” and “revealing structures of power” (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 8). In political science the definition of ideology, “a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values”, has remained the same over time (ibid.). The type of ideology that CDA aims at “unmasking” is different from the ideology of political science, and it is related to the everyday beliefs and dominant ideologies that appear as “neutral” (ibid.), but that, as van Dijk (2009, 78) claims, can legitimate dominance or power abuse. According to van Dijk (2009, 78–79) ideologies are “the fundamental social beliefs that organize and control the social representations of groups and their members”. Dominant ideologies are largely

unchallenged, and appear as “neutral”, which may lead to a situation in which people think alike and forget there are alternatives (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 8). Racism, which van Dijk (2000, 92) defines in terms of dominance and social inequality, includes various types of social practice, one type of which is discriminatory discourse in which biased claims and ideologically based social representations of certain groups and their members are made. According to van Dijk (2000, 94), politicians form one of the specific elite groups that are “greatly involved in [the] process of ideological reproduction”. By studying the common ways of talking about the different migrant groups in the British Parliament, I try to reveal ideologically based social representations of them. If discriminatory ways of speaking about these groups are common in the parliamentary debates, it can eventually influence the everyday beliefs of the people and become “neutral”.

Another concept that is central to CDA, and also related to ideology, is *power*. CDA often analyses the language of those in power, and studies especially the way those in power use language to (re)produce domination (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 9). According to Fairclough (2001, 2), the exercise of power is increasingly achieved through “ideological workings of language”, which means that use of language is one of the primary means of maintaining social control and power. Politicians, especially when in the government, have two types of power: 1) they have the power to change the legislation, or at least to influence the process of making new laws, which then regulate the lives of the people; 2) the media often quotes politicians, which gives them visibility and consequently they have the power to shape discourses. Hence, CDA is often interested in investigating the discourses that politicians have created, since they are often more powerful than the discourses created by “ordinary” people.

Wodak and Meyer (2009, 5) and van Dijk (2001, 96) have both pointed out that CDA has never been one specific theory and that there is no specific methodology characteristic of the research of CDA. CDA is merely a stance towards a text or a point of view from which a text is studied. As van Dijk says (ibid.), it is a “critical perspective on doing scholarship”. Scholars have used various methods, and the

research can focus on different aspects of language, e.g. on certain grammatical features or intertextuality. In the current thesis, CDA is combined with corpus linguistics (see section 3.3) and systemic functional grammar.

Systemic functional grammar (henceforth SFG) explores grammar in functional terms, i.e. the ways in which meaning is created and expressed through different grammatical and syntactic forms (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 19). The idea behind SFG is that functionality is intrinsic to language (ibid., 31), and that the different grammatical forms in a language have been created to serve a communicative purpose. Thus, attitude towards whoever is addressed and whatever is talked about is expressed through language (ibid., 29).

According to the transitivity approach that is a part of SFG, any clause can be divided into a process, participants involved in it, and circumstances (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 169). Six process types have been identified, and they are listed in Table 1 together with the participants involved in each process.

Table 1. Processes in Halliday's transitivity system (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 260).

Process type	Meaning	Participants
Material	Doing, happening	Actor, Goal
Behavioural	Behaving	Behaver
Mental	Sensing	Senser, Phenomenon
Verbal	Saying	Sayer, Target
Relational	Being, attributing	Carrier, Attribute
Existential	Existing	Existent

A very simple example of a material process would be *She ate an apple*, in which *She* is the Actor, eating is the material process and *an apple* the Goal. Thus, in material clauses something actually happens or something is done (to something/someone). An example of a relational clause is *Lisa is wise*, in which *Lisa* (Carrier) has an attribute *wise*. Generally processes are represented by verbs, but they can also be represented by other types of words, e.g. nominalised verbs.

Fowler et al. (1979) have harnessed Halliday's transitivity system for critical linguistics, and they argue that language structure and social structure are strongly connected (ibid., 26). They state that the forms of language in use are "a *part of*, as well as a *consequence of*, social process" (ibid., original emphasis). Fowler et al. (ibid., 198) also point out that predicates (i.e. processes in transitivity system), and the participants involved in the processes, are the most important components in a clause, since they represent the events and the situations most clearly.

What makes the transitivity system so important and how can it be used in CDA? First, it reveals what kinds of *entities* perform actions in a text, and, consequently, what *kinds of actions* these entities perform. Thus, for example, to study who is the Actor of a material process and who is the Goal of that process reveals what kinds of entities are given power and who are in a more passive role. According to Jahedi and Abdullah (2012, 366), the analysis that aims at identifying the process types assigned to different social actors of the in-group and out-group and the roles attributed to the social group can show that events and participants may be represented in a way that is ideologically biased. In the current study, SFG is employed when the verbs associated with the different migrant groups are investigated. The focus is on whether the migrants are given power to perform actions or whether they are just the targets of the actions of the decision makers, for instance.

The transitivity approach has been used as a tool especially for studies of the language in the media. In his article on Kenyan newspapers and their reportage of the run-up to the 1997 general election, Matu (2008) aimed at proving that transitivity model is a good tool for analysing whether news articles signal any bias, manipulation or ideology. By studying transitivity in the newspaper articles, he aimed to identify how ideology is constructed through language use. The analysis revealed a bias in the newspapers and showed that each newspaper that was analysed had a favourite party that they supported and whose positive values were brought to the fore.

Generally, studies in the field of CDA have mainly concentrated on media discourse and political discourse. This is because the media and politicians are seen as “elite”, and media discourse and political discourse as “elite discourses”. “Elite” is, according to van Dijk (1997, 32), the dominant white group that has access to “material social resources” as well as access to and control over various forms of public discourse. This means that the elite is able to shape the public opinion. Politicians have a special role, because, in addition to often being quoted in the media, they are the ones who make the decisions on legislation that controls the people in society. Van Dijk (1993) also considers academic discourse, educational discourse and corporate discourse part of the elite discourse.

A number of studies on immigration have been conducted in the field of CDA, since immigrants, and especially refugees and asylum seekers, are fairly powerless in society. Van Dijk has made a major contribution to the study of racism, especially in political discourse. He has pointed out that even though popular racism exists and may sometimes be more overt than elite racism, many beliefs and prejudiced attitudes are derived from interpretations of the elite discourse, such as political discourse. In 1997, van Dijk examined the ways in which politicians in Europe and North America in the 1980s and the 1990s spoke about race and ethnic relations, immigrants, refugees and other minority groups. His conclusion was that in the parliamentary debates racism was not explicit and that the speeches often premised on humanitarian values, such as tolerance, equality, and hospitality. However, he noted that the politicians presented immigration and minority relations as problematic, and sometimes even threatening, and that in the parliamentary debates refugees, immigrants and minorities were defined as a main cause of many societal problems.

Stewart, Pitts and Osborne (2011) studied how the word pair “illegal immigrant” was used as a metonym for immigrants from Mexico in a Virginian daily newspaper. They concentrated on the words that were used to refer to immigrants (e.g. proper name, “illegal immigrant(s)”), the actions that they were represented as performing or that were performed on them, and the adjectival words and phrases

attached. They argued that the newspaper constructed an illegal immigrant metonymy that affected local perceptions of Latinos and the perceptions on local immigration policies that were described as being insufficient.

Even though discourses on immigration have already been studied from many different perspectives in the field of CDA, I think that the research will never be complete, since the discourses are in a constant change. Furthermore, since in 2015 immigration was such an important issue in British politics as well as in everyday conversations, the ways migrants were discussed in the British Parliament should not be left unstudied. Since the UK has kept its own border controls, the British Parliament has more power over who is allowed to come to the country and who is not, compared to the EU countries that belong to the Schengen Zone. If we assume that the way migrants are talked about in the debates affect the perceptions of the people coming to the UK, a critical study on the debates is needed.

3.2 Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Analysis

Paul Baker is one of the leading scholars using corpora in discourse studies, and he has developed research methods combining discourse analysis and corpus analysis. In discourse analysis, researchers usually employ qualitative methods, which allow the researchers to familiarize themselves with the data they are studying and help them to find things that would probably go unnoticed if only quantitative methods were used. Baker (2006, 16), however, suggests that corpora could be used to aid the investigation. He points out that when different methodologies are combined together, they usually reinforce each other (*ibid.*). According to Baker, triangulation (i.e. using multiple methods of analysis) is accepted by most researchers.

Baker (2006, 10) lists four advantages of using a corpus-based approach to discourse analysis. First, it reduces researcher bias, even though perfect objectivity is considered impossible in all research, and more so in the humanities, since even claimed “objectivity” of the researcher is said to be a stance (*ibid.*). Often, at least when doing critical discourse analysis, researchers do not even claim being

objective, but often openly take the side of the less powerful. Baker (*ibid.*, 11) argues that we tend to find things that we want or expect to find. Usually things are not straightforward, but complex and contradictory, and corpora can help put things into perspective (*ibid.*, 12).

Second, Baker (2006, 13) mentions the incremental effect of discourse which can be revealed by using the corpus-based approach. Even though a single word or phrase can suggest the existence of a discourse, a corpus can reveal hegemonic discourses, and more easily show whether some way of speaking or writing is typical or not (*ibid.*). Third, a corpus brings forth the presence of counter examples and a diachronic corpus can show if a discourse has changed over time (*ibid.*, 14–15). The fourth advantage of using the corpus-based approach is, according to Baker, the advantage obtained from the usage of multiple methods of analysis (*ibid.*, 16).

The corpus data still need to be interpreted, which means that there can still be different conclusions, and that using a corpus does not remove the researcher bias altogether (Baker 2006, 18). Frequency plays a major role when reporting the results of corpus research (*ibid.*, 19), which means that some single occurrences that can carry more weight discursively are not necessarily reported at all. For instance, a comment by the Prime Minister in a newspaper article can be more powerful than comments by “ordinary” people. Furthermore, frequent patterns of language use do not always imply mainstream ways of thinking, since hegemonic discourses are often taken for granted, and it is thought unnecessary to repeat them (*ibid.*, 19). Sometimes it is more important to study what is not said.

The corpus tools that Baker suggests for the use of discourse analysis are concordances, frequencies, collocations and keywords (Baker 2006). Frequencies of words (i.e. which words are most frequently used in the texts under study) can reveal the focus of the texts (*ibid.*, 71): which themes have been under discussion and what types of words have been chosen instead of another. Baker points out that no terms are neutral, and the choice of words expresses an ideological position (*ibid.*, 47). With the help of concordance lists one can study how the search term has been used and whether there are some

typical ways of talking about refugees, for instance. Collocation lists show the words with which the search term is often associated, and finally, keyword lists give a measure of saliency. Keyword lists are compiled by comparing two word lists against each other in order to determine which words occur statistically more often (ibid., 125). Of these tools, collocation lists and keyword lists are used in the current thesis. Studying the keyword lists of the debates is expected to show what types of issues were on the political agenda before and after the general election of 2015. The collocation lists and the words with which the different migrant terms were often associated in the parliamentary debates offer information on the common ways of talking about the different migrant groups and hopefully on the attitudes towards migrants in the parliament.

Baker and McEnery (2005) have studied discourses of refugees and asylum seekers by combining discourse analysis with the corpus-based analysis. In their study they compiled two corpora, the first of which consisted of British newspaper articles and the second of texts from the Office of the UN High Commissioner of Refugees website. All the texts contained the word *refugee(s)* or the phrase *asylum seeker(s)*. They studied what were the typical ways of speaking about refugees and asylum seekers, concentrating on collocation, semantic preference and discourse prosody. “Semantic preference” and “discourse prosody” are related but they are slightly different in that discourse prosody is a more open-ended category which can be indicated, for instance, by listing “unpleasant things” that occur near the search word, while semantic preference could be indicated by listing all of the words for “drinks” that occur near the search word (Baker and McEnery 2005, 202). The study showed that there are some naturalised ways of talking about these groups of people, e.g. the water metaphor (e.g. *flood of refugees*), which was visible in both corpora. There were also quantifiers and references to the nationalities of refugees and asylum seekers. Often the quantifiers were vague, such as “tens of thousands”, which, according to Baker and McEnery, can make refugees and asylum seekers appear as an indistinguishable mass. In the newspaper articles refugees and asylum seekers were often seen as nuisance or a threat, and

in the UN articles they were treated as victims in need of help and assistance. However, Baker and McEnery pointed out that the picture of refugees and asylum seekers was less prejudiced than earlier researchers had found when looking at newspaper data.

4 Data and Methods

In this section, I introduce the data and the methods used in the study. I first describe the data and how it was chosen. Then I present the methods of analysis, which make use of the theoretical framework presented in the previous section.

4.1 Description of the Data

The data for the study have been collected from *Hansard Online*, where all the House of Commons debates since November 1988 can be found. The debates are transcribed on this website a day after each sitting and they can be fetched by date. The transcriptions include oral answers and questions, business without debate and voting results. The debates over the period of about two months before and after the general election of 2015 were collected for this study.

Debates are held in both houses of the parliament, but in this study, only the debates of the House of Commons are analysed. In the debates, the Members discuss proposed new laws, government policy and other topical issues (Internet source 7). The daily business of the House, in addition to the debates, also includes prayers, question time, urgent questions, and ministerial statements. Except for the prayers, I have included each of these in the data and they are handled in the same way as the debates are. In the question time, the MPs can ask the government ministers questions regarding their sector (Internet Source 8). If the MPs regard some issue as requiring an immediate answer from a minister, they may apply to ask an urgent question (ibid.). The ministerial statements are oral statements of the ministers to the House, and they may be made after the question time (ibid.).

Each five year parliament is divided into five 12-month sessions beginning and ending in the spring (Internet Source 9). The first sitting of the parliament in the session 2014-15 that is included in the data was held on February 2, 2015 and the last on March 26, 2015, and the first sitting in the session 2015-16 was held on May 27, 2015, and the last on July 20, 2015. Altogether 31 sittings before the election and 31 sittings after the election were collected. The debates are compiled in two separate corpora: the first corpus (Corpus A) includes the sittings before the election (session 2014-15) and the second corpus (Corpus B) the sittings after the election (session 2015-16).

The size of the Corpus A is 2,042,630 words and the size of the Corpus B is 2,290,850 words. The length of one transcribed debate varies from 29,567 words (9 Feb 2015) to 100,742 words (15 Jul 2015). The list of the sittings and the size of each file are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *The sittings and the sizes of the files.*

Corpus A	Word tokens	Corpus B	Word tokens
2 Feb 2015	53,490	27 May 2015	73,772
3 Feb 2015	71,335	28 May 2015	74,001
4 Feb 2015	72,584	1 Jun 2015	73,896
5 Feb 2015	72,954	2 Jun 2015	75,773
9 Feb 2015	29,567	3 Jun 2015	83,221
10 Feb 2015	83,465	4 Jun 2015	75,663
11 Feb 2015	82,176	8 Jun 2015	73,577
12 Feb 2015	67,384	9 Jun 2015	75,230
23 Feb 2015	73,706	10 Jun 2015	73,426
24 Feb 2015	63,151	11 Jun 2015	67,766
25 Feb 2015	71,438	15 Jun 2015	67,803
26 Feb 2015	73,355	16 Jun 2015	66,894
27 Feb 2015	38,695	17 Jun 2015	72,011
2 Mar 2015	72,165	18 Jun 2015	70,251
3 Mar 2015	72,796	22 Jun 2015	72,647
4 Mar 2015	65,844	23 Jun 2015	64,440
5 Mar 2015	72,251	24 Jun 2015	72,433
6 Mar 2015	38,100	25 Jun 2015	73,815
9 Mar 2015	70,123	29 Jun 2015	77,040
10 Mar 2015	73,142	30 Jun 2015	61,301
11 Mar 2015	54,823	1 Jul 2015	76,340
12 Mar 2015	72,999	2 Jul 2015	76,226
16 Mar 2015	51,206	6 Jul 2015	73,761
17 Mar 2015	65,212	7 Jul 2015	71,964
18 Mar 2015	72,689	8 Jul 2015	71,545
19 Mar 2015	73,221	9 Jul 2015	75,436
20 Mar 2015	48,310	13 Jul 2015	74,818
23 Mar 2015	82,371	14 Jul 2015	73,287
24 Mar 2015	70,296	15 Jul 2015	100,742
25 Mar 2015	67,284	16 Jul 2015	75,854
26 Mar 2015	66,498	20 Jul 2015	75,917
Total	2,042,630	Total	2,290,850

Some irrelevant parts, such as the voting results, have been removed from the files. However, the files still include parts that do not belong to the actual debate, such as the names of the speakers, column numbers and dates, but I decided not remove these, since it would have been too time-consuming. They are, however, ignored in the corpus analysis. The corpus is compiled and analysed by using the AntConc

toolkit (Anthony 2016), a free software that contains the basic tools for corpus analysis, such as concordance, word list and collocation tools (seven tools altogether).

4.2 Methods of Analysis

There are two parts in this study. The first is a more quantitative study, in which the methods of corpus analysis are used. The second is a closer analysis of all the corpus hits for *immigrant(s)*, *immigration*, *refugee(s)*, *asylum* and *asylum seeker(s)* for which corpus is used only for fetching the relevant data. The results of the two parts of the study will be summed up and discussed together after the analyses in order to get a more comprehensive picture of the ways the different migrant groups were talked about in the parliament.

The first part of the study is conducted by first studying the lists of keywords of both corpora for information on the most important themes discussed before and after the general election. After this, I will conduct an analysis of the collocates of the search words *immigra**, *refugee**,¹ and *asylum*.² The keyword lists are made by comparing the word lists of the two corpora, the Corpus A and the Corpus B, using log-likelihood test. The keyword list tool compares the word lists of the two corpora and gives a list of keywords, i.e. words that appear in the text more frequently than would be expected by chance when compared to another corpus that is either larger or of equal size (Baker, Hardie and McEnery 2006, 97). The log-likelihood test is a test for statistical significance similar to chi-squared measure, and it compares the observed and expected values for two datasets (ibid., 109). The keyword lists of both corpora can offer information on the most important themes discussed before and after the general elections.

¹ The asterisk in *immigra** and *refugee** is used in order to get the hits for *immigration*, *immigrant*, *immigrants*, and *refugee* and *refugees*.

² *Asylum* is used as a search word instead of *asylum seeker**, because asylum seekers can also be referred to with "people seeking asylum". *Asylum* can, of course, also be used in a context that would be irrelevant for the present study (e.g. asylum as 'a mental hospital'), but the probability of that happening is fairly low, and not seen as affecting the analysis.

The collocates of *immigra**, *refugee**, and *asylum* are studied in order to find out what kinds of words are used with the different migration terms. The window span will be five words to the left and right of the search word. The lists of the collocates are retrieved by using mutual information (MI) score, which gives information on the strength of the bond between two items. According to Hunston (2002, 73), the MI score measures the strength of the collocation (whether it is higher-than-random), while t-score, another option for retrieving the lists of the collocates, would measure the certainty of collocation, which means that “function” words, such as *the*, *and*, *are*, and *for* (words that tend not to be interesting when doing discourse analysis), would be given high scores (Mautner 2009, 125). The MI score tends to be high for low frequency words, since it is more probable for these words to co-occur with the search word than for grammatical words, for instance, which co-occur with almost any word. Since the words with low frequency should not be considered significant in spite of a high MI score, the words that co-occur with the search words less than five times will be ignored.³ Furthermore, following Hunston (2002, 71), MI score of 3.0 or higher will be considered significant.

After analysing the collocation lists, the items in the lists will be grouped according to their meaning. The effect of the collocates on the words under study will be analysed by making use of the terms “semantic preference” and “semantic prosody”. These terms are related, but slightly different. Semantic preference is the relation between a word form and a set of semantically related words (Baker and Ellece 2011, 125), while semantic prosody suggests an attitude, which means that seemingly neutral words can be influenced by the closeness of negative or positive words, if they predominantly co-occur with them (Bednarek 2008, 120). Both terms are related to collocation, and I hope they will offer information on the associations the different migration terms have. The collocation lists of each search term will also be compared with one another in order to examine whether there are differences in the treatment of these terms.

³ In this study, no distinction between upper and lower case is made.

The focus of the second part of the study will be on the verbs and nominalisations of verbs used in relation to the terms *immigration*, *immigrant(s)*, *refugee(s)*, *asylum* and *asylum seeker(s)*. The aim is to find out what types of actions and roles are associated with the different migrant groups. Furthermore, I am interested in whether these groups are active or passive, i.e. whether they themselves perform actions or whether they are merely the objects of the actions of others. I will also make use of the terms used in Halliday's transitivity approach in order to analyse what types of participant roles are given to these groups in the debates. All the hits for the terms will be analysed and the verbs associated with them will be put into two types of category: 1) active or passive (i.e. whether the entity referred to by the migration term can be seen as performing an action or whether it is the object of some action); 2) meaning category, according to the meaning of the verb phrase. With the help of these categories, I will compare the different terms and discuss the roles the different migrant groups and migration terms are given.

After presenting the results of these two parts, I will discuss the overall picture of the different migration terms offered by the collocates and the verbs. I will also discuss the differences between the treatment of the terms related to migration, and whether there was some change in the treatment of the terms between the two sessions. The way migration is talked about is expected to have changed after the general election, because the change in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the European Union was so significant. Furthermore, even though migration issues have for a long time been in the British political agenda, the topic became prominent only after the general election of 2015, which is expected to have affected the way the migrant groups are talked about.

In the next section I present the results of the analyses. First, the analysis of collocates will be introduced, which is followed by the analysis of the verbs. After this the results of both analyses will be summed up and discussed in section 6.

5 Analysis

Despite the fact that there were only two months between the last sitting of session 2014-15 and the first sitting of session 2015-16, the topics that were brought up in the debates were quite different. The list of keywords of the sittings offers information on the topics that were discussed in the parliamentary debates before and after the election. The top 20 words in the two keyword lists are given in Table 3.

Table 3. The top 20 keywords of both corpora. The Corpus A (session 2014-15) on the left, and the Corpus B (2015-16) on the right.

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Keyword	Rank	Freq	Keyness	Keyword
1	757	525.798	<i>lords</i>	1	3424	2422.408	<i>scottish</i>
2	354	436.699	<i>pubs</i>	2	3375	2124.568	<i>scotland</i>
3	989	436.561	<i>mental</i>	3	1340	1113.530	<i>snp</i>
4	303	434.247	<i>epilepsy</i>	4	1522	1026.959	<i>referendum</i>
5	408	364.842	<i>complaints</i>	5	826	906.007	<i>maiden</i>
6	635	307.029	<i>cancer</i>	6	751	577.419	<i>credits</i>
7	271	279.477	<i>complaint</i>	7	863	573.379	<i>productivity</i>
8	356	271.366	<i>avoidance</i>	8	1165	516.668	<i>english</i>
9	339	256.271	<i>code</i>	9	1754	468.747	<i>speech</i>
10	2217	247.373	<i>health</i>	10	1341	401.210	<i>eu</i>
11	237	241.474	<i>pub</i>	11	1148	377.027	<i>wage</i>
12	409	236.383	<i>register</i>	12	926	376.403	<i>poverty</i>
13	665	229.197	<i>crime</i>	13	306	333.602	<i>autonomy</i>
14	5064	226.880	<i>minister</i>	14	1397	327.815	<i>union</i>
15	164	220.462	<i>asbestos</i>	15	3854	288.410	<i>parliament</i>
16	300	212.832	<i>petition</i>	16	379	273.085	<i>queen</i>
17	407	211.881	<i>pension</i>	17	1719	273.031	<i>european</i>
18	710	207.078	<i>motion</i>	18	264	270.990	<i>childcare</i>
19	272	204.932	<i>hmrc</i>	19	1218	270.471	<i>kingdom</i>
20	200	188.835	<i>slavery</i>	20	294	268.515	<i>salmond</i>

The keywords were retrieved using log-likelihood score, which is a statistical measure of the relationship between frequencies (Night 2015, 27). The lists above show the 20 highest values for “keyness” of both corpora, which offer information on the statistical salience of a word (O’Halloran 2010, 571). For instance, *Scottish*, *Scotland* and *SNP* have high “keyness” values in the Corpus B, which means that these words occur with greater statistical salience in the Corpus B than in the reference corpus, the Corpus A. The lists are not complete lists of the keywords, since the names of the speakers, the pronouns and the auxiliary verbs have been removed, because they do not give information on the topics of the discussion (see Appendix 1 for a complete list). Furthermore, as mentioned in section 4.2, since keyword lists are retrieved by comparing the word lists of the two corpora, high in the list are the words that are unexpectedly frequent in the data. In this case it means that a word that has a high keyness value in one of the lists was not that frequent in the other corpus, and that from these lists are missing the words and the themes that were frequent in both corpora.

In the keyword list of the Corpus A, there are words such as *pub(s)* and *pension*, and words related to health (*mental*, *epilepsy*, *cancer*) and taxes (*avoidance* and *HMRC* [HM Revenue and Customs]). Pubs were discussed in relation to beer duty,⁴ and there was also debate over whether pubs should be protected in the same way as theatres are against changes of use, since, at least according to Charlotte Leslie (Con), two pubs were converted into supermarkets every week (HC 12 Feb 2015, c965). The health issues were discussed, for example, in relation to the support patients with epilepsy were given (HC 26 Feb 2015, c543). There was concern over the high number of patients with cancer in the UK (HC 5 Feb 2015, c486), and some MPs brought forth their concern over the mental health of Londoners (HC 12 Feb 2015, c1023). It seems that the topics discussed in the debates before the election were mostly domestic issues that are close to the ordinary people.

⁴ There was discussion on the survival of pubs if duty rates on beer were raised.

The keywords of the Corpus B and the topics discussed in the debates after the election seem to be more related to international issues and economy. *Scotland* and *Scottish*, however, are the two words that are highest in this list. The Scottish independence referendum had took place on 18 September 2014 in which the people of Scotland had voted to remain in the UK. The Scottish Parliament was promised more autonomy, and after the referendum there were proposals for further devolution of Scotland, which is why Scotland was often mentioned in the debates. Also, the Scottish National Party was discussed mostly because in the election it won 56 seats of 59 that were contested in Scotland, gaining 50 new seats, while the Labour Party lost 40 seats compared with the general election of 2010 (Hawkins, Keen and Nakatudde 2015, 14). *EU* and *European* are in the top 15, partly because there was quite a lot of discussion over the referendum that should be held on the EU membership of the UK (e.g. HC 27 May 2015). The EU was also mentioned almost whenever there was debate over immigration (e.g. HC 18 Jun 2015, c546). Other words in the list, e.g. *productivity*, *poverty*, *wage* are mostly related to economy.

In the light of these lists, it seems that before the election issues discussed in the parliament were more domestic and closer to the ordinary people of the UK than after the election, when the topics were more international and related to economy. There are, I think, two reasons for this. First, the MPs might think that there is no use bringing forth “big” issues right before the election, because there is not enough time to really take action anymore. Second, so close to the election, the MPs usually want to appeal to the voters by discussing “everyday” issues that the ordinary people understand and are important to them, so that the people see that the MPs care about their problems and represent their interests.

None of the different migration terms made it to either of the lists, the reason for which probably is that immigration issues are almost always on the political agenda. However, in the Figure 1 below we can see that the use of the words *refugee* and *asylum* increased in the parliamentary debates after the election, while the use of the words *immigrants/immigration* stayed more or less the same before and after the election, with a peak on 28 May and with a slight drop in the frequency after that.

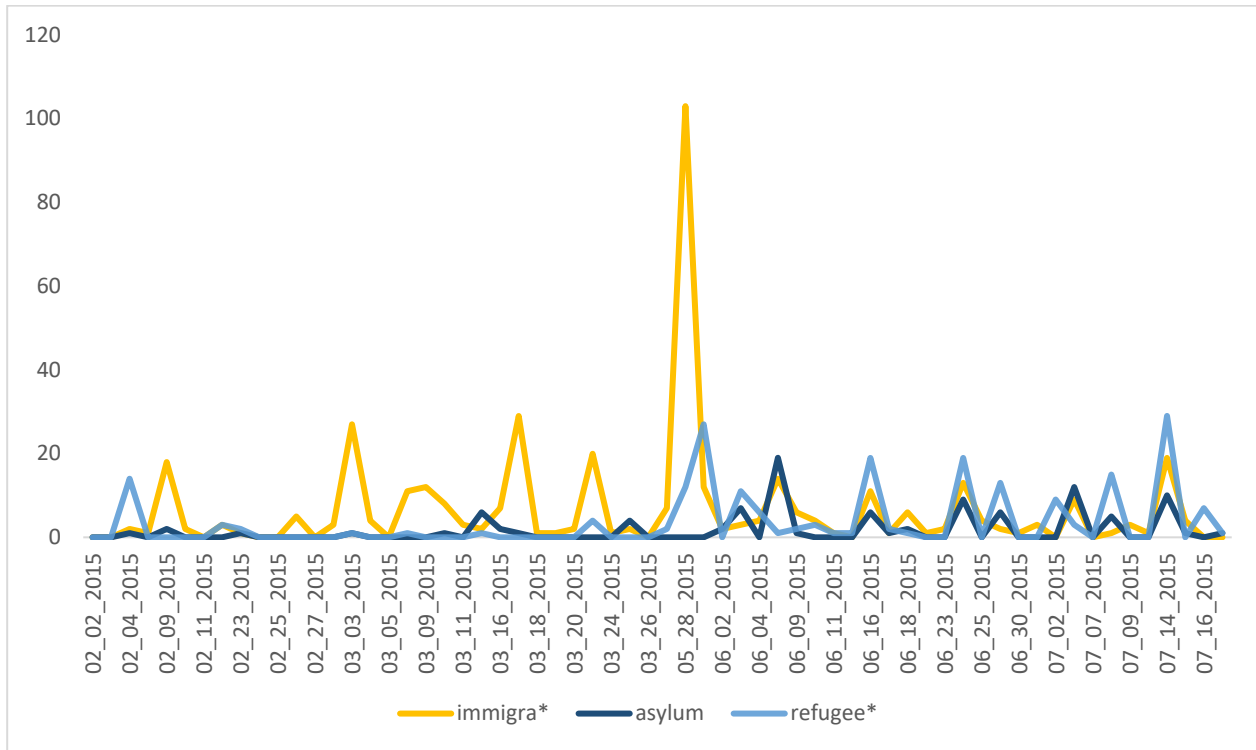


Figure 1. Immigrant(s)/immigration, asylum and refugee(s) in the two corpora.

The figure shows that the issues related to refugees and asylum seekers were rarely spoken about before the election, but right after the election the number of hits of these words increased. One of the reasons for this is that in April 2015, over 600 people drowned in the Mediterranean (Spindler 2015), after which, in May 2015, the European Commission proposed that the EU member countries should take in refugees under a quota scheme (BBC News 2015). The figure shows that refugees and asylum seekers became a prominent topic in the House of Commons after the general election.

In the following sections I will present the results of the analysis of the data. First, I will study the collocates of the words related to immigration found in the debates, after which I will present the results of the analysis of the verbs used in relation to the different migrant groups.

5.1 Collocates

In this section, I present the results of the analysis of the collocate lists of the search words *immigra**, *refugee** and *asylum*. I present the results by first discussing each search word separately. I will put the collocates into categories according to their meaning, and discuss what types of word often occur with the search word. I will give a number of examples, since the context can reveal a great deal about the actual meaning and usage of the words.⁵

5.1.1. *Immigra**

There were 165 hits for *immigra** in the Corpus A, and 237 hits in the Corpus B. The lists of the collocates with the highest MI scores of both corpora are presented in Table 4.⁶

⁵ I have modified the collocate lists manually, and removed all the function words, since they are not interesting for critical discourse analysis. In addition, the concordancer counts all the hits that fit to the window span (five words to the right and left of the search word), and, thus, does not take into account sentence boundaries. If the actual frequency of co-occurrence in the same sentence was less than five, the word has been deleted from the list. The complete lists retrieved by the concordancer can be found in Appendices.

⁶ In the case of both corpora, the concordancer retrieved over 50 collocates for *immigra**. I took the first 20 and removed all the function words, and the words that co-occurred with the search word in the same sentence less than five times. This is why there is an uneven number of collocates in the lists presented here. See Appendix 2 for the full list of the collocates for *immigra**.

Table 4. The collocates of search word *immigra** in the Corpus A and the Corpus B, ranked by the MI score.

2014-15	Freq.	MI score	Collocate	2015-16	Freq.	MI score	Collocate
1	5	20.47657	<i>uncontrolled</i>	1	33	11.52012	<i>illegal</i>
2	5	19.82449	<i>nationality</i>	2	8	11.47573	<i>detention</i>
3	19	19.12246	<i>detention</i>	3	5	10.52012	<i>brokenshire*</i>
4	17	18.82064	<i>brokenshire*</i>	4	6	9.64565	<i>asylum</i>
5	17	17.67442	<i>james*</i>	5	5	9.61323	<i>controls</i>
6	6	16.29903	<i>promise</i>	6	6	8.93516	<i>enforcement</i>
7	13	15.96547	<i>rules</i>	7	9	8.08272	<i>control</i>
8	5	15.90022	<i>enforcement</i>	8	6	7.91033	<i>james*</i>
9	21	15.86246	<i>security</i>	9	6	7.76079	<i>policies</i>
10	7	15.72496	<i>centre</i>	10	5	7.63260	<i>rules</i>
11	6	15.48626	<i>draft</i>	11	5	7.05415	<i>tackle</i>
12	7	15.23797	<i>control</i>	12	10	6.93066	<i>policy</i>
13	19	14.92221	<i>act</i>	13	5	6.73876	<i>recognise</i>
14	6	14.69834	<i>introduced</i>	14	7	6.72015	<i>measures</i>
15	11	13.95586	<i>system</i>	15	10	6.60364	<i>act</i>
16	28	13.46329	<i>minister[†]</i>	16	11	6.57122	<i>system</i>
				17	5	6.03148	<i>benefits</i>
				18	14	5.91915	<i>bill</i>
				19	6	5.83713	<i>services</i>
				20	9	5.72932	<i>issue</i>

* James Brokenshire, Minister of Immigration (not taken into account in the analysis).
† “Minister” is not used in the speeches, but only in the transcriptions after the name of a minister (e.g. “Minister of Immigration”). This word is not taken into account in the analysis.

I have divided these collocates into five categories: “Policy” (words relating to the administrative procedures), “Control”, “Action”, “Campaign”, and “Other”. The categories and the words in them are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *The Collocates of immigra*.*

Category	2014-2015	2015-2016
Policy	<i>nationality, enforcement, security, act, system, introduced</i>	<i>enforcement, policies, policy, act, system, bill</i>
Control	<i>uncontrolled, rules, control, detention, centre</i>	<i>illegal, detention, control, rules, controls</i>
Action		<i>tackle, recognise, measures</i>
Campaign	<i>promise</i>	
Miscellanea	<i>issue</i>	<i>asylum, services</i>

In the category “Policy”, there are words such as *enforcement, policy, act, bill* and *system*. All the words in this category somehow refer to the administrative processes and how immigration issues are handled in practice. Here are some examples (my emphasis):

- (1) Secondly, they provide for no *immigration enforcement* action to be taken against domestic workers, should they breach immigration conditions, again only if they are found to be a victim of trafficking or slavery. (Paul Blomfield, Lab, HC 17 Mar 2015, c672)
- (2) They may therefore be treated differently by the *immigration system*; they may have a spouse who is earning far more than them. We said that the system ought to be reviewed to ensure that it does not have perverse consequences. (Yvette Cooper, Lab, HC 28 May 2015, c217)
- (3) Whatever debate we have around having good controls over our *immigration policy*, the success or otherwise of those people who make their lives here is intrinsically linked to the success of our country, and we should never ever forget that. (Justine Greening, Con, HC 1 Jun 2015, c421)

Examples 1 and 2 deal with the concrete procedures that are part of the immigration policy, and in example 3 the speaker mentions the debate that the MPs are having around the immigration policy, and she wants to remind the House that the well-being of the people correlates with the well-being of the country.

The second category, “Control”, includes words such as *rules, control, uncontrolled* and *illegal*, all of which, I think, give an impression that immigration should be tightly controlled.

- (4) What I say to the hon. Lady, and therefore to anyone who wants to ask questions about this, is that when her party was in government, it stripped 200,000 places at the time of a baby boom and allowed *uncontrolled immigration*. (Nicky Morgan, Con, HC 2 Mar 2015, c672)
- (5) *Immigration detention* is costly, ineffective and unjust. It costs millions of pounds a year. Some 70% of people who go into *immigration detention* go back into the community. (Richard Fuller, Con, HC 3 Mar 2015, c829)
- (6) It is my strongly held view that Britain would be better off out of the European Union, because we would be able to *control our immigration* and save the £10 billion a year membership fee. (Philip Hollobone, Con, HC 12 Feb 2015, c944)
- (7) They are two separate issues. Yes, we should have strong *controls on immigration* and we should have a sensible debate, but we should also make sure that we do not turn our back on our historical tradition of providing sanctuary for those in greatest need. (Yvette Cooper, Lab, HC 28 May 2015, c218)

In example 4, the speaker defends her party's policies by reminding the Labour Party of the decisions they had made when the party was in the government that caused "uncontrolled immigration". In example 5 the speaker talks about the defects of immigration detention, and in examples 6 and 7, both speakers speak for strong immigration control. In example 6 the speaker argues that the European Union is the reason why the UK cannot control its immigration. In example 7 Yvette Cooper reminds the House that the UK has a tradition of helping those that flee their home countries.

I have included the collocate *illegal* in this category, since I think it also refers to the control over immigration. The frequency of this collocate in the Corpus B is striking (33, MI score 11.52), while in the Corpus A a search for *illegal immigra** only retrieved one hit. Here are some examples from the Corpus B:

- (8) That has been the case in too many other instances, helping rapists, murderers and *illegal immigrants* rather than their victims or the law-abiding majority. Where we can, we have taken action. (Theresa May, Con, HC 28 May 2015, c211)
- (9) Do we not need to work on the longer-term problem of *illegal immigrants* trying to find their way into Europe and into this country? What measures is the Home Secretary taking to tackle this long-term issue? (Victoria Atkins, Con, HC 24 Jun 2015, c896)
- (10) We have revoked the driving licences of 11,000 *illegal immigrants*, closed down nearly 900 bogus colleges, and carried out over 2,900 sham marriage operations in the past year. (Theresa May, Con, HC 14 Jul 2015, c733)

Examples 8, 9 and 10 each are about the actions that should be taken against illegal immigration. Example 8 shows how serious a crime illegal immigration is considered to be in the UK, as it is put in the same category with rape and murder.

The three remaining categories for collocates of *immigration* and *immigrant(s)* are smaller. The words in the category “Action” each describe the actions that the MPs and/or people in general take or should take: “to *tackle* the causes of illegal immigration” (David Hanson, Lab, HC 24 Jun 2015, c889), “*recognize* the impact of immigration” (Theresa May, Con, HC 28 May 2015, c211), and “*measures* to better control immigration” (Michael Gove, Con, HC 28 May 2015, c289). In the category “Campaign”, there is only one word, *promise*, and it appears in the session 2014-15, before the general election:

- (11) In 2010 the Prime Minister said that if he failed to deliver on his promises, voters should kick him out—his promise on pointless reorganisations of the NHS, his *promise on immigration* in the tens of thousands, his promise to wipe out the deficit in this Parliament. (Steve Rotheram, Lab, HC 4 Feb 2015, 271)
- (12) So now we know: we cannot believe the *promise on immigration* from the leader of the Conservative party. It is not worth the paper it is written on. (Edward Miliband, Lab, HC 4 Mar 2015, c938)

In examples 11 and 12, as in each of the six instances of *promise* and *immigration* co-occurring, a member of the opposition accuses the government or the Prime Minister of breaking a promise on immigration, i.e. of not cutting the number of immigrants. In five instances out of six, the speaker was Edward Miliband, the Leader of the Opposition, accusing the Prime Minister of not keeping his promises, which seemed to be a part of Miliband’s general election campaign.

The last category is called “Miscellanea”, which includes words that were used in various different contexts. In example 13 below, William Cash speaks for national sovereignty, and he says that international treaties should be overridden if they are against the interests of the country. In example 14, the speaker lists reasons for the rise in the number of immigrants, and in example 15, the speaker states his concern over the pressure that immigration puts on public services.

- (13) I trust that the House, the Minister and the Prime Minister will listen, and that we will take the steps necessary to deal with the vexed *issue of immigration* in a manner that overrides the treaties and the charter, as and when it is in our vital national interest to do so. (William Cash, Con, HC 9 Mar 2015, c91)
- (14) Since the 1960s Edmonton has been transformed from a predominantly white, working-class industrial suburb into a multicultural area *through Commonwealth immigration, asylum seekers* and the expansion of the European Union in May 2004. (Kate Osamor, Lab/Co-op, HC 2 Jun 2015, c538)
- (15) ...but I am worried about the impact of freedom of movement on low-paid jobs and *the effect of high levels of immigration on public services*. (Ian Austin, Lab, HC 9 Jun 2015, c111)

The collocates in each of these categories offer quite a “faceless” picture of immigration. As can be seen in the examples, the MPs very rarely speak about the immigrants themselves, but mostly about immigration as an issue. It seems that “immigration” is a concept that does not include people. It is something more remote, an abstract issue that needs to be dealt with and controlled. When immigrants are mentioned, the topic is usually illegal immigration. What is also striking is that *immigrant* in singular was only mentioned once in session 2014-15, when an MP mentioned that he himself is an ethnic immigrant (Paul Beresford, Con, 4 Feb 2015, c286). In the session 2015-16 there were 10 hits for *immigrant*: there were three instances of *illegal immigrant*, in three instances an MP said that he/she has an immigrant background, and the remaining four were *immigrant town*, *immigrant communities*, *immigrant labour* and *immigrant population*. Thus, the facts that the immigrants are usually talked about in plural, that hardly any singular cases are ever mentioned, and that immigration is treated as an abstract problem can make it difficult for the MPs and the people of the UK to remember that they are talking about real people.

5.1.2. *Refugee**

In the Corpus A, the search word *refugee** (*refugee/refugees*) retrieved 26 hits, and in the Corpus B, 184 hits. These numbers quite clearly show how dramatic the change was and how prominent the topic

became after the general election. The collocates of *refugee** with the highest MI scores are presented in Table 6 below (see Appendix 3 for a complete list of the collocates).

Table 6. The collocates of search word *refugee** in the Corpus A and the Corpus B, ranked by the MI score.

2014-15	Freq.	MI score	Collocate	2015-16	Freq	MI score	Collocate
1	6	14.64007	<i>syrian</i>	1	13	14.03836	<i>camps</i>
2	5	8.96991	<i>help</i>	2	33	13.94935	<i>syrian</i>
3	5	8.67845	<i>million</i>	3	5	13.65985	<i>resettlement</i>
				4	6	13.12933	<i>jordan</i>
				5	5	12.75938	<i>camp</i>
				6	10	11.93738	<i>commissioner</i>
				7	6	11.37034	<i>asylum</i>
				8	8	11.07488	<i>migrants</i>
				9	7	11.00777	<i>mediterranean</i>
				10	13	10.60986	<i>syria</i>
				11	20	10.54160	<i>crisis</i>
				12	5	10.48992	<i>migration</i>
				13	10	10.13628	<i>vulnerable</i>
				14	8	9.82696	<i>nations</i>
				15	6	9.79085	<i>thousands</i>
				16	10	8.69946	<i>high</i>
				17	8	8.46673	<i>countries</i>
				18	5	8.44003	<i>accept</i>
				19	9	8.07377	<i>million</i>
				20	9	7.77902	<i>children</i>
				21	8	7.72911	<i>united</i>
				22	8	7.55219	<i>number</i>
				23	7	7.21769	<i>world</i>
				24	5	7.18303	<i>help</i>
				25	10	7.05104	<i>support</i>

In the Corpus A, only three words co-occurred with *refugee(s)* more than five times. These three words, however, clearly show what the topic usually was when refugees were talked about; Syrian refugees were a prominent topic already in the session 2014-15, as was the number of the refugees. The help refugees should be given or were given was also often discussed.

The collocates of both corpora are divided into six categories (“Origin”, “Vulnerability”, “Number”, “Policy”, “Migration” and “Current situation”), and the categories are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. The collocates of refugee*.

Category	2014-2015	2015-2016
Origin	<i>syrian</i>	<i>syrian, jordan, mediterranean, Syria, camp, camps</i>
Vulnerability	<i>help</i>	<i>vulnerable, children, help, support</i>
Number	<i>million</i>	<i>thousands, million, number</i>
Policy		<i>resettlement, countries, accept</i>
Migration words		<i>asylum, migrants, migration</i>
Current situation		<i>crisis, world</i>

The biggest category is “Origin”. In this category, there are words that describe where the refugees either are or have come from. *Mediterranean* is not an origin of refugees, but it was often mentioned when talking about where the refugees are, as in example 16, and where they are coming from. It was also said that there is a “refugee crisis” in the Mediterranean, as in example 17.

- (16) Finally, we are an island, but whether it is the terrorism in Tunisia, Syria, Kuwait or France, whether it is the *refugees in the Mediterranean*, whether it is the economy in Greece, or whether it is the radicalisation of young people here at home, this week’s terrible events remind us emphatically once again that we are all interconnected. (Harriet Harman, Lab, HC 29 Jun 2015, c1179)
- (17) The Secretary of State rightly acknowledged that the situation in Calais is closely linked with the *refugee crisis in the Mediterranean*. We know that many of the people camped in Calais are from war-torn countries such as Syria. (Stuart C. McDonald, SNP, HC 14 Jul 2015, c740)

This category mostly includes words that describe the origin of refugees: Syrian/Syria and Jordan. Also, the refugee camps, where most of the refugees lived, was a prominent topic. The camps were often discussed from two different perspectives: either the MPs spoke for taking care of the refugees in the

camps, so that they would not feel the need to come to the UK, or they were concerned about the living conditions in the camps. Examples 18 and 19 are examples of these two types of perspectives:

- (18) ...does he accept that we need to continue as a country, together with others, to properly support those countries when dealing with refugees, because under-resourced and ill-run *refugee camps* can become a breeding ground for extremists? (John Baron, Con, HC 1 Jun 2015, c320)
- (19) There is a philosophical argument, which we have discussed in the House, as to whether this country should take in more refugees or provide more support in the region. I have visited the Zaatari *refugee camp*, and it is clear that the majority of Syrians want to remain in that location, which is why we are donating so much money—£800 million—to support people in the region. (Tobias Ellwood, Con, HC 14 Jul 2015, c723)

The second group of collocates, which I have named “Vulnerability”, consists of words that describe refugees as vulnerable and in need of help.

- (20) As I said in response to an earlier question, that programme is in place to *help Syrian refugees* who particularly need to take advantage of it. The most important thing is to get broad international support to *help the 3.8 million refugees* who are now in the region and need assistance. (Justine Greening, Con, HC 4 Feb 2015, c259)
- (21) Under the Dublin convention, it is their responsibility to assess those who may be vulnerable or who have asylum claims, and who should not be further victim to people traffickers or the despair that comes from being a *vulnerable refugee* travelling over large distances. (Yvette Cooper, Lab, HC 14 Jul 2015, c734)

In example 20 Justine Greening mentions the need for international cooperation in helping the refugees, and in example 21 Yvette Cooper speaks about vulnerable refugees who feel the need to travel long distances in order to have their asylum claims properly assessed. Refugee children were often mentioned, and they were considered especially vulnerable. In examples 22 and 23, the speakers talk about the importance of education:

- (22) Education is vital for all children, but especially *children who are refugees*: they are children and they should be in school. Many of the children I have met have been through hugely distressing situations. When asked to draw pictures, they draw pictures of places that have been bombed. (Justine Greening, Con, HC 8 Jul 2015, c301)

- (23) What is the Secretary of State doing to ensure that Lebanese schools educating both *refugees and Lebanese children* are supported at this very critical time? (Jeremy Lefroy, Con, HC 8 Jul 2015, c302)

The number of refugees fleeing from their home countries or coming to the UK was quite often mentioned in order to make the listeners realize the extent of the problem. In example 24, the speaker claims that since the number of refugees is so high, helping all of them is very difficult. On the other hand, in example 25 Angus Robertson argues that Europe could actually do more to help the refugees in the Mediterranean.

- (24) On Iraq in particular, we work extremely hard on the so-called winterisation approach, ensuring that tents are warm, that people have blankets and that appropriate shelter, food and sanitation are in place. That has been done, but the challenge in the region is now immense. The Syrian crisis alone has seen *3.8 million refugees*. (Justine Greening, Con, HC 4 Feb 2015, c263)
- (25) It is a stain on the conscience of Europe that *thousands and thousands of refugees* have been dying in the Mediterranean, when many lives could have been saved. (Angus Robertson, SNP, HC 3 Jun 2015, c583)

The words in the category “Policy” were mentioned when the UK refugee system was compared to the systems of other countries, and it was often brought up that the UK is not taking as many refugees as some other EU countries are, as can be seen in examples 26 and 27. *Resettlement* was usually mentioned in relation to the resettlement programme in the UK.

- (26) Now, in contrast, the UK has an appalling record on the *resettlement of Syrian refugees* and is not prepared to co-operate with other European nations on accepting refugees who have been rescued in the Mediterranean. Why does the Prime Minister think it is fair for Sweden, Germany and other countries *to accept those refugees*, while the UK turns its back on them? (Angus Robertson, SNP, HC 3 Jun 2015, c583)
- (27) Although I welcome the extension of the *resettlement programme for Syrian refugees*, are we not open to the criticism that it is too little, too late, particularly when compared with the more generous *resettlement and refugee programmes* that other countries have for those fleeing persecution? (David Burrowes, Con, HC 29 Jun 2015, c1202)

Often, both refugees and asylum seekers were mentioned when, for example, there was discussion on the number of migrants coming to the UK, and no difference between these two terms was necessarily made.

Furthermore, (economic) migrants and refugees were quite often mentioned together, and between these two terms the difference was usually made clear: refugees are welcome if they really are refugees, but economic migrants are usually not.

- (28) Will the Minister also look to the humanity of those escaping places such as Libya, rather than being driven solely by Daily Mail-style quotas? Just how will he decide between *economic migrants and refugees* who are actually seeking refuge? (Angus Brendan McNeil, SNP, HC 9 Jun 2015, 1030)
- (29) My right hon. and learned Friend raises important issues, but it is wrong to assume that all the people coming through those routes are *refugees or have valid asylum claims*. Significant numbers come not from the countries to which he refers, but from Senegal, Nigeria and other west African countries, for whom the issue is somewhat different. (Theresa May, Con, HC 24 Jun 2015, c892)
- (30) Every country in Europe is facing issues of immigration and of people moving across borders, but we should be clear in this House about separating the debate on immigration from that on *asylum and refugees*. They are two separate issues. Yes, we should have strong controls on immigration and we should have a sensible debate, but we should also make sure that we do not turn our back on our historical tradition of providing sanctuary for those in greatest need. (Yvette Cooper, Lab, HC 28 May 2015, c218)

In example 28 Angus McNeil speaks for the humanity in separating between economic migrants and refugees. In examples 29 and 30 the speakers want to remind the House of the difference between immigrants and refugees, but from two quite different perspectives.

The last category, named “Current situation”, includes words that were used to describe the severity of the situation. The situation was often compared to the Second World War, which is why *world* is in this category: it was said that this is the “worst refugee crisis since the second world war [sic]”, as in example 31. Also, as can be seen in examples 31, 32 and 33 below, describing the situation as “a crisis” had become very common in the UK, as in other European countries, too.

- (31) We want to see a positive case not just for remaining a part of that Union, but for looking at where we could work together more closely, for example, on security, on dealing with the worst *refugee crisis since the second world war* in the Mediterranean, on climate change, which we were all lobbied about yesterday, or on creating a more socially just Europe. (Stephen Gethins, SNP, HC 18 Jun 2015, c497)

- (32) There is a *refugee crisis* around the world that has to be addressed very quickly. (Jeremy Corbyn, Lab, HC 1 Jun 2015, c354)
- (33) We have a programme for resettling particularly vulnerable families, but if he thinks that the answer to a *refugee crisis* of tens of millions of people is a resettlement programme, he is completely wrong. (David Cameron, Con, HC10 Jun 2015, c1195)

In the light of these results, it could be said that refugees were often seen as a *mass* of people, and a *refugee*, a person, was rarely mentioned in singular (only two instances of *refugee* without it being a part of a compound word). Also, the number of refugees was often mentioned. It seems that refugees were still treated better in the debates than the other types of migrants, since they were seen as really needing help. However, seeing refugees as vulnerable does deprive them of some power, since then they are perhaps not seen as being able to take care of themselves. The situation was considered very acute and at least the MPs in the opposition seemed to think that the UK was not doing enough to help the refugees.

5.1.3. *Asylum*

There were 19 hits for *asylum* in the Corpus A, and 88 in the Corpus B, which again shows that the topic became an important part of the political agenda after the general election. Below in Table 8 are presented the collocates of *asylum* in both corpora (see Appendix 4 for a complete list of the collocates).

Table 8. The collocates of the search word *asylum* in the Corpus A and the Corpus B, ranked by the MI score.

2014-15	Freq	MI score	Collocate	2015-16	Freq	MI score	Collocate
1	10	16.71407	<i>seekers</i>	1	20	14.66802	<i>seekers</i>
2	6	11.96811	<i>immigration</i>	2	6	14.66802	<i>seeker</i>
3	6	9.01132	<i>act</i>	3	13	11.28100	<i>claims</i>
				4	8	9.98854	<i>claim</i>
				5	6	9.64565	<i>immigration</i>
				6	10	7.58162	<i>system</i>
				7	5	6.72082	<i>here</i>
				8	5	5.70455	<i>uk</i>
				9	5	5.48314	<i>country</i>
				10	8	4.56999	<i>people</i>

Only three words in the Corpus A were qualified as significant collocates for *asylum*, and 10 words in the Corpus B. I have divided the words into four categories, and they are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9. *The collocates of asylum.*

Category	2014-2015	2015-2016
Destination		<i>uk, country, claim, claims, here</i>
Seeker	<i>seekers</i>	<i>seekers, seeker, people</i>
Migration	<i>immigration</i>	<i>immigration</i>
Policy	<i>act</i>	<i>system</i>

The first category, “Destination”, can seem quite broad, since the words in this category are all fairly different from one another. However, the contexts in which these words appeared in co-occurrence with *asylum* are quite similar. In most cases in which these words co-occurred with *asylum*, the MPs were talking about why the asylum seekers are coming to the UK and not claim asylum in some other country, or whether the people that have come to the UK have already made asylum claims elsewhere and could, according to the Dublin Regulation, be removed from the UK.

- (34) Why do clandestines cross continents of free countries to *claim asylum here*? While we must honour our obligations under the tightly defined criteria for *asylum claims* laid down in the 1951 Geneva convention, how much does the way that we adjudicate on the much wider provisions of the European convention on human rights unreasonably inflate *asylum claims* so that the *UK attracts people to claim asylum here* rather than elsewhere, and what should be done about that? (Bernard Jenkin, Con, HC 8 Jun 2015, c906)
- (35) My hon. Friend has made an important point about the established principle enshrined in the Dublin regulation that those in need of protection should seek *asylum in the first safe country* that they enter. Since 2003, when the regulation came into force, it has allowed us to transfer more than 12,000 *asylum seekers from the UK* to other European states. (James Brokenshire, Con, HC 6 Jul 2015, c21)

In example 34, the speaker is worried that the UK seems too attractive to the people seeking asylum, and implies that something should be done about that, for example, weaken the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. In example 35, the speaker (Minister of Immigration, James Brokenshire), announces that the

Dublin regulation has been beneficial for the UK, since it has allowed more than 12,000 asylum seekers to be transferred to other European states.

The second category, “Seekers”, includes words that can be expected to co-occur with *asylum*: *seeker*, *seekers* and *people*. Thus, these words refer to the people that seek asylum. In example 36 below, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, wants to make clear that the UK will give people asylum, if they really need it. However, he says that the majority of the people who cross the Mediterranean are not really in need of help:

- (36) I take issue with the hon. Gentleman. This country has an asylum system and a record of giving *people asylum* that we should be proud of. When people are fleeing torture and persecution, they can find a home here in Britain. But let us be clear: the vast majority of people who are setting off into the Mediterranean are not *asylum seekers*, but people seeking a better life. (David Cameron, Con, HC 3 Jun 2015, c583)

Example 37 deals with the actions that should be taken against those that are staying in the country illegally, and in example 38 the speaker points out that refugees and asylum seekers should not be included in the net migration target, because she thinks it is immoral.

- (37) Earlier this year, a case was reported of a failed *asylum seeker* whose application had been refused in 1997 but who, incredibly, was still here in 2015, mainly owing to the Human Rights Act. Will the Minister please confirm that all the illegal immigrants found at Harwich will be returned within 18 days, never mind 18 weeks, 18 months or 18 years? (David Nuttall, Con, HC 8 Jun 2015, c913)
- (38) Britain has been seen for many years as a safe haven for political freedom. We must not let that slip away. An ill-conceived net migration target that includes refugees and *asylum seekers* is, frankly speaking, immoral, and it should put us to shame. (Tulip Siddiq, Lab, HC 16 Jun 2015, c197–198)

As can be seen in example 37 and in Table 8, *asylum seeker* in singular was also mentioned; there were six hits for *asylum seeker*, in one of which it was a part of a compound word (*asylum-seeker children*), and in one of which it was mentioned as a term “*asylum seeker*”. In one instance the speaker said that she herself is a daughter of a political asylum seeker, and in four instances out of six the speaker’s aim was to get more rights for asylum seekers.

In the third category there is only one word, *immigration*. In the Corpus A all the instances in which *immigration* co-occurred with *asylum* were the same: “the Immigration Act 1971 or the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006”. In the Corpus B, the instances were more varied. However, they mostly related to the immigration system in the UK and in the EU, and how the asylum and immigration cases were processed. Also, in two instances the speaker talked about making a separation between immigration and asylum. In example 39 the speaker asks how the different procedures in the EU are regulated, and in example 40 the same speaker asks for the separation between the debate on immigration and on asylum and refugees.

- (39) The Home Secretary talked about the work that is being done to tackle people smuggling more widely, but what is being done to make sure that *immigration control and asylum process* assessments take place in the southern Mediterranean countries too? (Yvette Cooper, Lab, HC 14 Jul 2015, c735)
- (40) Every country in Europe is facing issues of immigration and of people moving across borders, but we should be clear in this House about separating the debate on *immigration from that on asylum* and refugees. They are two separate issues. (Yvette Cooper, Lab, HC 28 May 2015, c218)

The last category, “Policy”, which is similar to the categories of the same name for the collocates of *immigra** and *refugee**, includes two words: *act* and *system*. All the instances of *act* are the same as the cases of *immigration* in the Corpus A: “the Immigration Act 1971 or the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006”. When the asylum system was mentioned, it was usually evaluated, as in examples 41 and 42 (see also example 36). Example 43 deals with the abuse of the country’s asylum system.

- (41) They will be going ahead with their plans, but I think that what we should be doing is helping with the resettlement, and also pointing out that our *asylum system* has already given asylum to many people from the most vulnerable areas of the world, and continues to do so. (David Cameron, Con, HC 29 Jun 2015, c1180)
- (42) On the contrary, I continue to believe that there is a place in our *asylum system* for a detained fast track system. I have always felt that one of the important things about any *asylum system* is its ability to give people decisions as quickly as possible and as merited from the details of their particular case. We are pausing the detained fast track system while we have a review of certain aspects of it, but I continue to believe that it is an important part of the *asylum system*. (Theresa May, Con, HC 7 Jul 2015, c3)

- (43) Obviously, we remain vigilant against those who abuse our *asylum system* and our hospitality, which is why we are following the Dublin regulation and ensuring that those who are coming here not for asylum are processed effectively and removed if they have no right to be here. (Mary Robinson, Con, HC 8 Jun 2015, c912)

To sum up, the collocates of *asylum* revealed that, while some of the MPs were proud of giving people asylum and helping those that leave their home countries, there was also discussion on how the asylum system should be changed so that people would not come to the UK, but would claim asylum in some other country. Thus, asylum seekers were unwanted and seen as a burden, but at the same time, helping them and giving people asylum was thought noble and the right thing to do.

In the next section, I move on to analyse what types of actions were connected to immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the debates. In section 6, the results of the analyses of both, collocates and verbs, are compared and discussed in more detail.

5.2 Processes

In this section I present the results of the study of the verb phrases and the nominalised verbs used when talking about immigration. I study the verbs associated with the terms *immigration*, *immigrant(s)*, *refugee(s)*, *asylum* and *asylum seeker(s)*, but I exclude compound words that include these terms (e.g. *immigration detention*, *asylum claim*) from the analysis, since the focus of the analysis is on the treatment of the different migrant groups. All the hits for these terms are collected, and the verbs used in relation to these terms are analysed. The aim of this part of the study is to find out whether the different migrant groups are represented as active or passive, and, following the transitivity approach, what types participant roles they are given in the debates.

In the case of each term the verbs are first divided into two categories: active or passive. Here, the terms “passive” and “active” are used differently from the grammatical terms relating to active voice and passive voice. The terms are used in order to show what the role of the analysed term is in the clause: do, for example, immigrants perform an action or are they the target of some action. The verbs are further

divided into categories according to their meaning. Each term has its own categories, depending on the verbs associated with it.

I present the results in three sections: in the first subsection I discuss the terms *immigration* and *immigrant(s)*, in section 5.2.2 the results for *refugee(s)* are presented, and finally, in section 5.2.3, the terms *asylum* and *asylum seeker(s)* are discussed.

5.2.1. *Immigration, immigrant and immigrants*

Below in Table 10 are presented the verbs that were used in relation to the term *immigration*. All the verbs in the table are either in the base form or in the third form in present tense. Thus, if there was more than one occurrence of a verb, all the occurrences have been put together regardless of the form.

Table 10. Processes associated with immigration

Immigration	Passive	Active
Threat	allow uncontrolled (mass).. (2);* can [not] control the level of; concerned about the level of; have unlimited; fuel illegal...;† raise... as a scare story;	illegal... gets worse; crops up; is three times higher; uncontrolled mass...increases pressure on public services; can drive down wages; is too high; attempted illegal...can occur;
Control	control (over/of) (12); tackle (illegal)(5); deal with (illegal) (2); be soft on; manage; preside over uncontrolled mass...; cut; have strong controls on; reduce; to help mitigate the threat of; bear down on;	
Effects	recognise the significance of; recognise the benefits of; take the benefits of;	(has an/the) impact on/of (4); brings benefits; effect of; benefits of; brings home to us; enhance;
Importance to politics		is important; features as hugely important; was an issue; was a subject; dominates; has been at the heart of politics; was one of the key factors; is among those issues; was the No. 1 issue; is a good thing; drives;
Debate	promise on (6); pledge on (2); avoid talking about; have a debate on; not to regard...as of any interest;	
Opinion	resentment against; have a problem with; separate the debate on;	is too commonly seen as a handicap; is not simply an economic phenomenon;
Other action	do on (2); reduce; detain for; reform;	
Miscellanea	inlcude (illegal) (2); affect; exploit; facilitate illegal...; focus on; approach;	is much lower;

* In case there was more than one occurrence of the same verb, the number of the occurrences is in parentheses.
† The three full stops mark the place of the search word (i.e. in this case *immigration*).

As can be seen in the table, *immigration* appears to be quite evenly both active and passive. The verbs are further divided into eight categories, two of which (“Other action” and “Miscellanea”) include verbs that were difficult to put into any specific category. Four categories, “Threat”, “Control”, “Effects” and “Importance to politics” are the most important, and they are discussed in this section.

In the category “Threat”, there are verbs that describe immigration as threatening and something that is getting worse. The processes in this category are mostly material processes in which *immigration* has either the participant role of the Actor or the Goal: immigration either does something that is threatening (e.g. *increases pressure on public services*) or immigration is the target of some action that according to the speakers makes the situation worse (e.g. *allow uncontrolled mass immigration*). Mostly,

the verbs in this category are associated with the amount of (illegal) immigration and indicate that (illegal) immigration is a problem and out of control. In examples 44 and 45 Theresa May tells about the actions that will be taken to deal with different problems related to immigration.

- (44) Uncontrolled mass *immigration increases pressure on public services* and *can drive down wages* for people on low incomes. That is why we are committed to reducing net migration. (Theresa May, Con, HC 23 Mar 2015, c1097)
- (45) We will also create a new enforcement agency to crack down on the exploitation that *fuels illegal immigration*. (Theresa May, Con, HC 28 May 2015, c211)

The next category, “Control”, is related to “Threat” in that this category includes verbs that describe what should be done to the threat posed by (illegal) immigration. *Control* is the most common verb in this category and actually the most common verb used in association to *immigration*, overall. In this category, there are only material processes for which *immigration* is the Goal. Examples 46 and 47 deal with controlling immigration:

- (46) Our approach is very much about *controlling immigration* while attracting the brightest and best, including students to study at our universities. (James Brokenshire, Con, HC 9 Feb 2015, c546)
- (47) Labour should remember that one reason why it lost the trust of the British people is that it lost *control of immigration*. It is the responsibility of Government *to control immigration*. The British people demand it of us and this Government have set out the ways in which they will do so. (Christopher Pincher, Con, HC 28 May 2015, c241)

Another often used verb was *tackle*, as in example 48:

- (48) Night after night we see on our television screens the wave of human misery coming to our shores from the middle east and north Africa and the problems being caused at Calais. That is what everybody is talking and concerned about, so may we have a full day’s debate on the Floor of the House about Britain’s immigration policy and how we are going to *tackle both legal and illegal immigration being too high*? (Philip Hollobone, Con, HC 25 Jun 2015, c1060)

Just out of curiosity, I made a search for *tackle* in both corpora to see what kinds of topics were discussed in the parliament when this verb was used. A quick look at the concordance hits revealed that the following issues, among others, are or should be tackled according to the MPs: abuse, child sexual

exploitation, climate change, corruption, cybercrime, extremism, inequality, ISIL, and poverty. Thus, most of the things that are or should be tackled are fairly serious. There were also some examples of issues that were not so urgent (e.g. “to tackle the theatrical nature of this Chamber and its tough audience”).

Immigration was also discussed in relation to the impact it has on society, as can be seen in the category “Effects”. In this category, *immigration* is mostly either the Phenomenon in mental process (e.g. *recognise the significance of immigration*) or the Actor in material process (e.g. *immigration brings benefits*). The verbs in this category express that *immigration* can also have positive effects, but they just need to be recognised. In example 49 the speaker first mentions some problems related to immigration and then says that there are also benefits:

- (49) We recognise that public services will be put under pressure because of a larger population. We recognise that housing will be put under pressure, but we still *recognise the benefits of immigration*, and how it enriches us. (Tulip Siddiq, Lab, HC 16 Jun 2015, c198)

The last category that is discussed here is “Importance to politics”, and the verbs in this category show how important immigration was considered to politics. Furthermore, immigration was considered one of the crucial issues in the general election. Here, immigration is always the Carrier of some attribute in relational processes (e.g. *immigration is important*; *immigration was the No. 1 issue*). In example 50 the speaker points out that immigration has been an important issue for more than a decade already.

- (50) We have just emerged from a long general election campaign, during which *immigration featured as a hugely important* and sometimes toxic issue. In Barking and Dagenham, *immigration has been at the heart of politics* for more than a decade. (Margaret Hodge, Lab, HC 28 Jun 2015, c238)

In the rest of the categories, immigration is mostly passive, and in most cases either the Phenomenon in a mental process (e.g. *have a problem with immigration*) or the Goal of a material process (e.g. *reduce non-EU immigration*).

I will not go through the rest of the categories of *immigration*, since they are considerably smaller than the first four. Let us now move on to discuss the verbs used in relation to *immigrant(s)*, which are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Processes associated with immigrant(s).

<i>Immigrant(s)</i>	<i>Passive</i>	<i>Active</i>
<i>Control</i>	revoke the driving licences of (over 9,500 illegal.../11,000 illegal...) (2); deny access to illegal...; deny financial services to illegal...; prevent illegal... from accessing services; will not stop illegal...; stop the flow of illegal...; apprehend;	
<i>Movement</i>	return; give safe passage to illegal...;	(illegal...) come through (2); illegal... cross; seek to enter; illegal... try to find;
<i>Opinion</i>	blame on; resentment against; problem of illegal...; turn hostile to;	become the scapegoats;
<i>Miscellanea</i>	find (50 illegal..) (2); help illegal...; become a charter for; have; push ... towards; process; pay lip service to;	
<i>Effects</i>		fuel the recovery;

As can be seen in the table (and also, as was noted in section 5.1.1.), if immigrants were discussed, the topic was often illegal immigrants. Most of the phrases in the table include the word *illegal*, and I have left the word in the phrases, so that the difference between *illegal immigrant(s)* and *immigrant(s)* can be seen.

In the parliamentary discourse, immigrants were generally passive, and the participant role was usually the Goal in a material process. When immigrants were active, their participant role was always the Actor in a material process.

The first category is “Control”, which includes verbs that describe how the actions of illegal immigrants are or should be restricted, e.g. illegal immigrants’ access to services are or should be denied, as in example 51, or their driving licences are or should be revoked, as in example 52.

- (51) The new immigration Bill, particularly the provision on *preventing illegal immigrants from accessing services that allow them to remain in the country* and the “deport first, appeal later” principle in respect of people with no status to remain in the country, will be a powerful

tool that could help to reset the whole immigration agenda. (Stephen Hammond, Con, HC 28 Jun 2015, c263)

- (52) *We have revoked the driving licences of 11,000 illegal immigrants*, closed down nearly 900 bogus colleges, and carried out over 2,900 sham marriage operations in the past year. The new immigration Bill that we will bring before the House later this year will build on this work and enable us to take stronger action still. (Theresa May, Con, HC 14 Jul 2015, c733)

Describing the way immigrants move from one place to another was often discussed, and especially in relation to their coming to the UK. Verb phrases expressing the movement of immigrants are listed in category “Movement”. In example 53, Philip Davies says that the people crossing the Mediterranean should be turned around and taken back to where they came from.

- (53) May we have a debate on the continued *crossings of illegal immigrants across the Mediterranean*? While it is perfectly understandable that people want to see people who are at risk of dying rescued, many of my constituents are concerned that the Royal Navy is picking these people up and continuing their journey into the EU, rather than picking them up, turning them round and taking them back to where they came from. Is it now the Government’s policy *to give safe passage to any illegal immigrant seeking to enter the EU or the UK*, provided they can prove that their journey is dangerous and life-threatening? (Philip Davies, Con, HC 18 Jun 2015, c480)

The third category, “Opinion”, consists of words that describe the stance towards immigrants. In most cases immigrants were passive, and they were the Phenomenon of a mental process. The debate about the EU membership often became a debate about immigration, which is also pointed out by Peter Grant in example 54:

- (54) The hon. Lady perceptively mentioned the danger that the debate about EU membership could be turned by some into a debate about immigration, and such a debate can quickly *turn hostile to immigrants* as human beings. (Peter Grant, SNP, HC 16 Jun 2015, c253)

The attitude towards immigrants expressed through these verbs was negative in each case. However, these opinions were brought into daylight and acknowledged, and it seems that they were usually expressed in the hope that these attitudes would not be realised.

Because the remaining two categories are fairly small, I will not discuss them here. Instead, I move on to discuss the verbs used in relation to *refugee* and *refugees*.

5.2.2. Refugee and refugees

The verb phrases and nominalised verbs used in relation to *refugee* and *refugees* are collected in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Processes associated with refugee(s).

<i>Refugee*</i>	<i>Passive</i>	<i>Active</i>
<i>Assistance</i>	support (for/to) (9); help (for) (8); assist (3); rescue (2); educate (2); allow (2); give priority to; give sanctuary to; meet (the needs of); bring ashore; protect; aid; do for; provide sanctuary; welcome; stand up for; permit;	
<i>Difficulties</i>	threaten; exploit; condemn;	die(2); face appalling humanitarian situation; remain stranded; reach out for help; unable to return; flee persecution; risk lives; face death; seek safety; end up living in; attempt;
<i>Take in /Handle</i>	take (in) (10); include(5); accept(5); deal with (4); resettle (3); cut (the number of); reconsider (the pitifully small number of); settle; handle; relocate;	
<i>Opinion</i>	represent; decide between; agree on; attitude to; use terms such as; distinguish between; separate the debate on;	
<i>Movement</i>		come (3); move (from...into) (3); travel (2); flee (2); arrive; cross;
<i>Effects</i>		put strains on;
<i>Miscellanea</i>	meet; see; show scenes of; indicate (the number of); address; create; catch up; expect; sit with; repatriate;	live (2);

The picture that is given of refugees here is quite similar to that which was given by the collocates: they are vulnerable and they need assistance. Refugees, similarly to immigrants, were mostly represented as passive, except in the category “Difficulties”.⁷ The verb phrases in the first category, “Assistance”, describe how the refugees are helped and given assistance to, and the refugees are thus the Goals of the action in material processes. In examples 55 and 56 the actions that are taken to protect refugees are described:

⁷ It could be argued, that in “to face death/an appalling humanitarian situation” (which I have put in the “active” category) the subject is actually passive, since the situation comes upon the refugees without their own effort. However, since it can also be argued that the refugees know the situation and decide to take the risk anyway, they “actively” face death and the “appalling humanitarian situation” because they need to, and are thus in this case considered active.

- (55) This horn of Africa initiative focuses on combating people smuggling and trafficking in the region. It will bolster sustainable regional *protection for refugees* by working with key countries of origin, including Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as transit countries such as Libya and Egypt. (James Brokenshire, Con, HC 16 Jun 2015, c298)
- (56) We are *assisting refugees* and displaced people throughout the region with the provision of more than £800 million of humanitarian relief. When it comes to spending priorities, I think we are right to *give priority to that humanitarian catastrophe and the millions of refugees*—people who have been displaced within Iraq and Syria and those who fled to neighbouring states—over other forms of relief. (David Lidington, Con, HC 12 Feb 2015, c1019)

The second category, “Difficulties”, consists of verbs that describe the risks refugees face when fleeing their home countries. In examples 57 and 58 the speakers describe the difficult conditions many refugees are in.

- (57) The persecution of the Rohingya by the Burmese Government still continues, and the *appalling humanitarian situation* they, and *especially the refugees*, face continues, too. (Yasmin Qureshi, Lab, HC 3 Mar 2015, c805)
- (58) We have seen heartbreaking coverage as thousands of Rohingya *refugees and Bangladeshi migrants have remained stranded* in squalor in smugglers’ boats at sea while initially Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia refused to allow them to land. (Jonathan Ashworth, Lab, HC 4 Jun 2015, c877)

In most of the phrases in this category, the refugees were represented as the Actors in material processes. One of the major reasons for refugees’ difficulties was said to be the smugglers who exploit their situation.

Refugees were also discussed in relation to the number that should be accepted to come to the country. The verbs in the category “Take in/Handle” also express how refugees are or should be dealt with once they have arrived. Thus, something is done to refugees, which means that they are the Goals in material processes. There were also a couple of examples of them being the Phenomenon in a mental process (*accept, reconsider*). In example 59, the speakers criticises his country’s refugee policies.

- (59) We all know about the Kindertransport and the children who were accepted and given refuge in the UK. Now, in contrast, the UK has an appalling record *on the resettlement of Syrian refugees* and is not prepared to co-operate with other European nations on *accepting refugees* who have been rescued in the Mediterranean. Why does the Prime Minister think it is fair

for Sweden, Germany and other countries to *accept those refugees*, while the UK turns its back on them? (Angus Robertson, SNP, HC 3 Jun 2015, c583)

In the parliament, and also outside the parliament, there has been some discussion on the use of the different terms relating to immigration. In the category “Opinion” I have put verb phrases such as *distinguish between* and *use terms such as*, which were used when the speaker said he or she wanted the other MPs to be careful when using the terms *refugee*, *asylum* and *immigration*, and to make a clear distinction between these terms, as in examples 60 and 61 below:

- (60) The shadow Home Secretary rightly talked about the need to *distinguish between asylum and immigration*, but then she muddle-headedly expressed a number thoughts [sic] in which she completely brought them back together again. (Stephen Hammond, Con, HC 28 May 2015, c262–263)
- (61) I thank my hon. Friend for drawing attention to that issue. Reports about what is happening at Calais and about people crossing the Mediterranean often *use terms such as “refugee” or “asylum seeker”* to describe all those people, although, as we know, a significant proportion of them are economic migrants who are trying to enter Europe illegally. (Theresa May, Con, HC 24 Jun 2015, c902)

The fifth category is “Movement”, which includes verbs expressing some type of movement from one place to another, and all of which represent material processes in which the refugees are the Actors. The same type of verbs were found in relation to *immigrant(s)* (see Table 11). In example 62 the Second World War is brought up again as the “movement of refugees” is said to be the largest since that war.

- (62) Turning now to how we resolve that crisis, which, as the right hon. Gentleman will know, has seen *the largest movement of refugees* since the end of the second world war [sic], can he tell the House what expectations he has for the new round of talks that UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura is holding in Geneva? (Hilary Benn, Lab, HC 17 Jun 2015, c311–312)

The category “Effects” only has one verb phrase (*put strains on [host communities]*), and in category “Miscellanea” there are, again, verb phrases that did not fit into any specific category.

5.2.3. *Asylum, asylum seeker and asylum seekers*

These terms had the least hits in the corpora, and consequently, there are also fewer verb phrases. For this reason, I have combined the categories for all the three terms (*asylum*, *asylum seeker* and *asylum seekers*), and the verb phrases used in relation to these terms are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Processes associated with asylum seeker, asylum seekers and asylum.

<i>Asylum seeker(s) / Asylum</i>	<i>Passive</i>	<i>Active</i>
<i>Take in/Handle</i>	grant (6); give (5); have (3); take (3); offer (2); require; home; assimilate; toughen up the regime on; imprison; deal with; cut in support allowances for; lock up; include; process; decline;	
<i>Applying</i>	claim (11); seek (6); apply for (2); effort on;	make fresh submissions;
<i>Opinion</i>	separate the debate on; distinguish between; use terms such as;	
<i>Movement</i>	disperse; distribute; transfer; locate;	attempt to come to western Europe;
<i>Difficulties</i>		hear hostile rhetoric;
<i>Amount</i>		numbers of...are down;
<i>Help</i>	safeguard;	
<i>Miscellanea</i>	elect;	live;

All the verbs used in relation to *asylum* are in the category “Passive”, as are most of the verbs used in relation to *asylum seeker(s)*. In almost all cases, the verbs represent material processes and the terms analysed have the participant role of the Goal.

The biggest category of verb phrases is “Take in/Handle”, and the verbs in this category are either about giving or declining asylum, or about what is or should be done with or to asylum seekers once they have arrived in the country. In examples 63, 64 and 65 the asylum system of the UK is either defended or criticised.

- (63) Secondly, I have indicated that our Syrian vulnerable persons scheme will take several hundred people over a few years. *A number of Syrian asylum seekers have been granted asylum* in the United Kingdom. The Government and I remain of the view that the majority

of our support is best given by supporting the refugees from Syria in the region, as we have done by providing £900 million in aid. (Theresa May, Con, HC 14 Jul 2015, c740–741)

- (64) Yes, I do, and that is why Britain fulfils its obligations in *taking asylum seekers* from all over the world and having a system that many other countries see is robust and fair. (David Cameron, Con, HC 24 Jun 2015, c883)
- (65) How we treat others is a mark of our humanity and our values. I will not stop until we see the end of the abomination of dawn raids like those that happened in my constituency last week, and I will not stop until we shut down the *imprisoning of asylum seekers* at Dungavel. (Natalie McGarry, SNP, 2 Jun 2015, c526)

The second category, “Applying”, is about asylum seekers claiming or applying for asylum, and the most common verbs in this category are *claim* and *seek*. In example 66 the speaker claims that there is confusion over how the asylum claims should be assessed. In examples 67 and 68 James Brokenshire mentions the Dublin regulation, which has some effects on the asylum system in the UK.

- (66) The issue with the length of time for which people are detained is that the system that we inherited had too many layers, too many procedures and too many appeals, which meant that we could not get to the bottom of whether somebody was right to *claim asylum* or whether they should be returned to their home. (Karen Bradley, Con, HC 3 Mar 2015, c831–832)
- (67) We have already begun the work to seek the removal of the remaining migrants from the UK, and 15 have already been successfully removed. If we can show that those *claiming asylum* have also claimed in another EU member state, we will seek to remove them under the Dublin regulations. (James Brokenshire, Con, HC 8 Jun 2015, c905)
- (68) My hon. Friend has made an important point about the established principle enshrined in the Dublin regulation that those in need of protection *should seek asylum* in the first safe country that they enter. (James Brokenshire, con, 6 Jul 2015, 21)

The verb phrases in category “Opinion” are the same verb phrases that can also be found in Tables 10 and 12, and they are all about separating the different terms relating to migration from each other.

The movement of asylum seekers was also quite frequently discussed, as was the movement of refugees. In this case, however, the movement of asylum seekers is mostly “passive”, in that the instigators of the movement are usually not the asylum seekers themselves, as can be seen in examples 69 and 70.

- (69) The numbers of asylum seekers are down by a third from the peak they reached under Labour. We are fast-tracking more cases and we are resolving more cases more quickly, but I have to say to him that the legislation governing *the distribution of asylum seekers* was put in place under the last Labour Government. (David Cameron, Con, HC 25 Mar 2015, c1425–1426)
- (70) Since 2003, when the regulation came into force, it has allowed us to *transfer more than 12,000 asylum seekers* from the UK to other European states. (James Brokenshire, Con, HC 6 Jul 2015, c21)

Since the remaining four categories are so small, I will not discuss them here.

In the next section, I will discuss all the results presented in this study, and compare the results of the analyses of each search word.

6 Discussion

The analyses of the migrant terms (*immigration/immigrant(s)*, *refugee(s)* and *asylum*) showed that the different migration groups were treated differently in the parliamentary debates. The reasons to come to the country were considered to be different, which is why it was thought that each migrant group should have a different set of rights. To put it bluntly, some groups were considered more welcome than others.

Each of the terms for the different migrant groups that were studied were mostly represented as passive, and they were usually the targets of some action (i.e. the Goals in material processes). There were also some mental processes in which the attitude towards immigration and the different migrant groups was expressed. *Immigration* also had the participant role of the Carrier in relational processes, and in these processes the speakers wanted to express the importance of immigration to politics. The migrant groups were rarely the Targets of verbal processes and never the Sayers in verbal processes.

Thus, after analysing the transitivity processes it could be said that the different migrant groups were mostly represented as the targets of the actions of others. In the processes in which they were active themselves, they either faced a difficult situation or came to the country, even though they were “unwanted”. Furthermore, their opinions were not expressed in the debates. There were only few verbal processes, and in none of these a migrant group was the Sayer. In the mental processes, attitudes towards

migrants (Phenomenon) were expressed, and the opinion was usually represented as being a general opinion of the people or the opinion of the government or the MPs.

All the verb phrases in the two corpora were analysed together, since there were no significant differences in the verbs co-occurring with the terms between the two sessions. However, the collocates in the two sessions were analysed separately. In the first session (2014-15), the general election affected the discussion in that the promises made by the MPs were brought up in the debates. For instance, David Cameron's promise on immigration was brought up a few times. Asylum seekers were hardly spoken about at all in the first session, and refugees were not that prominent a topic before the election, either. In the second session (2015-16), illegal immigration was often discussed and especially the way illegal immigrants should be dealt with. The number of refugees and asylum seekers was so high after the election that the situation started to be called a "crisis", and the number of refugees was also mentioned many times, since the number was exceptionally high after the election.

In spite of there being a slight drop in the frequencies of the terms *immigration* and *immigrant(s)* after the election (with an exception on 28 May), immigration has for a long time been a prominent topic in the parliamentary debates. The drop after the election can perhaps be explained by the increase of the frequencies of the other migration terms (*asylum* and *refugee(s)*). Nevertheless, immigration was thought an important topic for politics in general and especially important for the general election of 2015. It was even said that immigration was the most important issue at the election. Some MPs were worried of the different migration terms being used interchangeably in the parliament and wanted the other MPs to be careful when using the terms and urged them to separate the terms from one another.

There are different types of immigrants and they have different reasons to leave their home countries. Under the term *immigration* a great deal of different types of migrants can be discussed without targeting one single group. Consequently, immigrants and immigration were often discussed as an abstract issue and often in relation to administration and the immigration system. In the analyses of both

the collocates and the verb phrases co-occurring with the terms *immigration* and *immigrant(s)*, it was noted that words describing some type of control were frequent. Thus, immigration was seen as something that should be controlled and restricted. Uncontrolled immigration was considered a bad thing that resulted from a “sloppy” immigration system. When immigrants (people) were discussed, the topic was often illegal immigration. Especially in the session 2015-16 illegal immigrants were seen as a severe problem that should be handled without delay. Some previous studies have shown that the term “illegal immigrant” is disproportionately used, especially in the media, and that it is sometimes used when referring to immigrants that are just “unwanted”, but not necessarily illegal (e.g. Stewart, Pitts and Osborne 2011). In the parliamentary debates, illegal immigration was seen as a serious crime, and it was seen as a problem for the UK. Thus, *controlling* the immigration and making the country less attractive were considered necessary actions to *tackle* the problem.

The words co-occurring with *refugee(s)* gave an impression that refugees are vulnerable and in need of assistance. Refugee children were mentioned a few times, as were the risks refugees need to take when they flee their home countries. Even though some speakers in the parliament may have put asylum seekers and refugees in the same category, refugees mostly seemed to be treated quite differently from asylum seekers and immigrants. Perhaps this is because refugees have already been given an asylum, while there can be debate on whether asylum seekers and immigrants have the right to come and live in the UK. Some of the MPs also wanted to remind the House that the UK has a tradition of giving people refuge, of which the people should be proud. However, even though seeing refugees as vulnerable and in need of assistance may be a positive thing in the sense that they are more easily accepted to come and stay in the country, it may also deprive them of power. If it is thought that refugees are not able to take care of themselves and that all they need is a safe place to live, they are not necessarily given the opportunity to fend for themselves. Furthermore, people might turn hostile to refugees if they turn out to

be wealthy and in good physical condition, which often is the case, since the journey is often costly and physically demanding.

The number of refugees was often mentioned, as was their country of origin, and this was also noted in the study by Baker and McEnery (2005), but since the estimates of the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers vary, the numbers themselves do not appear in the collocate lists, and thus are not analysed in this study. According to the study by Baker and McEnery (2005) of the representation of refugees and asylum seekers in British newspaper articles and the UNCHR webpage, both refugees and asylum seekers were presented as vulnerable and in need of assistance. According to the current study, however, it is mostly the refugees that are seen as vulnerable. The asylum seekers were mostly discussed in relation to how they should be handled and what the process of claiming asylum is or should be.

When asylum seekers were discussed in the parliament, the speakers often wondered why they come to the UK. The debates gave the impression that asylum seekers are unwanted, while at the same time it was still felt that helping asylum seekers is the right thing to do, and, as was mentioned earlier, that the UK should be proud of giving people asylum. The asylum system in the UK was often considered too attractive, and also, some MPs were worried that the hospitality of the UK was taken advantage of. As for the other terms as well, the MPs often talked about how asylum seekers should be handled and controlled. There were quite a few verb phrases co-occurring with *asylum* and *asylum seeker(s)* that were about making restrictions on their rights: about imprisoning them and cutting in their support allowances, for instance.

Some MPs mentioned the negative attitude that there is or has been towards the immigrants and the asylum seekers (“resentment against immigrants and immigration”; “asylum seekers constantly hear hostile rhetoric”), and especially immigrants were mostly seen in a negative light. When the benefits of immigration were brought up, it was often preceded with *recognise*, as in example 49. Thus, the view that immigration also brings benefits seemed to be in the margins. The negative attitude was

acknowledged, however, and there was an effort to abolish it or at least urge the MPs to be more careful when speaking about the different migrant groups. In his study on the European and North American parliamentary debates, van Dijk (1997, see section 3.1) argued that migrants were defined as a main cause of many societal problems. This was not the case in the debates analysed here, even though the MPs did present immigration as problematic in other ways. There was some concern over the pressure that a great number of immigrants would put on public services, but otherwise the MPs mostly criticised the immigration system. On the other hand, MPs tried to bring forth the hospitality of their country, which was also one of van Dijk's conclusions.

The current situation was generally called a “crisis”, and it was often said that the refugee crisis is the worst since the Second World War. Naming something a “crisis” may, of course, be helpful in that it causes a feeling that the situation is very urgent and needs attention, and since ignoring the issue is not helpful to the people fleeing their home countries. However, the word “crisis” may also cause some panic and a feeling that the country needs to be protected against it. Thus, the word may cause the people to turn against refugees. Additionally, mentioning the Second World War brings forth negative feelings for most people. In this light it is interesting that even when the MPs were defending the rights of the refugees, they still called the situation a “crisis”. This might be because “refugee crisis” has become such a natural word pair that the speakers did not even think of other options.⁸ This might also be the case for “illegal immigrant”.

I had two sets of research questions: 1) how are immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers treated in the parliamentary debates, and 2) what types of associations do the words related to migration have in the debates, and what types of roles are different migrant groups given? I hoped that answering the

⁸ The difficulty in doing critical discourse analysis is that the analysts themselves need to pay attention to their choice of words. Calling the situation “refugee crisis” would indeed be very easy and it even sounds natural, for the simple reason that it is so often used, for example in the media. I have, however, tried to avoid using the term “refugee crisis”, and other words that might give a biased picture of the situation.

questions of the second set would take me closer to answering the first question. Based on the results of this study I argue that the different terms related to migration had different types of associations in the debates: immigration was mostly discussed in relation to the administrative processes and the immigration system; refugees were often associated with words that described their origin or their vulnerability; and the motives of asylum seekers were often questioned, and the MPs often wondered why they wanted to come to the UK. On the roles that the different migrant groups were given it could be said that each migrant group was mainly passive in the debates, since they were mostly represented as targets of some action: immigrants were controlled, refugees were helped, and asylum seekers were “handled” in some other way. Asylum seekers were hardly ever represented as “active, and if immigrants were active, they moved from one place to another, while refugees faced different types of difficulties.

Hence, each migrant group was treated differently in the debates, even though the MPs were often accused of not separating the terms clearly enough. Immigration in general was seen as a problem, but helping refugees was considered important. Asylum seekers were surprisingly little discussed, but the asylum system was often evaluated. Even though I think a clearly racist discourse was not found, the debates on immigration were still mostly negative and mainly concentrated on the problems.

7 Conclusion

In this study critical discourse analysis and corpus analysis were combined, which made it possible to analyse quite a large amount of data, and thus get a broad picture of the ways in which the different migrant groups were talked about in the British parliamentary debates. Nowadays corpora are frequently used in many sorts of linguistic studies, and corpus analysis can fairly easily be combined with other methods. Even though in CDA qualitative study and a close analysis are important and even necessary, corpus can offer useful background information and reduce researcher bias in the analysis, as was pointed out by Baker (2006, 10).

This study focused on two things: collocates and processes. The collocates of different migration terms were retrieved by a concordancer, which calculated the mutual information score, i.e. the strength of the bond between two items. The lists of collocates were then analysed and the words were categorized according to their semantic meaning. According to the theory of semantic preference and semantic prosody, the meaning of a word is affected by the words that often co-occur with it, and thus, for instance, as the word *refugee* often co-occurs with words such as *support*, *vulnerable* and *help*, the meaning of *refugee* may be altered in our minds and begin to include these characteristics. Furthermore, as *immigrant* fairly often co-occurs with *illegal*, which is quite a negative term, the word *immigrant* itself begins to have negative associations.

The study of the collocates revealed that all the terms that were studied had some negative associations: immigration and immigrants were seen as a problem (especially illegal immigration) and something that should be controlled, while *asylum* often occurred in clauses in which the motives of asylum seekers were questioned. In contrast, the words *refugee* and *refugees* often co-occurred with words relating to help and support, which suggests that refugees were seen as vulnerable and in need of help. The number of refugees coming to the UK was also often mentioned and seemed to be important for the MPs, which suggests that the number of refugees was considered to be too big, and that taking care of these people was seen as a burden. Nevertheless, while migrants coming to the UK were often seen in a negative light, the country's tradition to help the people fleeing their home countries was also considered as something that the people should be proud of.

The processes with which the different migrant groups were associated in the debates were analysed by using the theory of transitivity of systemic functional grammar. Studying the transitivity system especially in media discourse and political discourse is important, because it can reveal power relations in a text: which entities are active and given power to, for instance, to state their opinions, and which entities are merely the objects of the actions of others. In this study the names of the different

types of processes and participant roles created by Halliday were only briefly mentioned in the case of each migrant group, and the focus was mainly on the separation between “active” and “passive” (i.e. whether the migrants themselves did something, or whether something was done to them) and on the semantic categorization of the processes that were associated with these groups. However, it was interesting that migrants were only either the Actors or the Goals in material processes or the Phenomenon in mental processes (in addition, *immigration* was also the Carrier in a few relational processes). Hence, in addition to doing something or being the target of some action, migrants were an issue of which different opinions and attitudes were stated. No clauses in which migrants were the Sayers were found, and thus, the opinions of migrants themselves were not stated in the parliamentary debates.

I think that if I had offered some numeric information on the different processes in which the migrants were involved, the results would have been more interesting and useful. These numbers could then in the future have been compared to the processes in which other types of participants were involved in the speeches, or, on the other hand, to the processes in some other sort of data (media discourse, for instance) in which migrants are involved. For instance, in future studies it would be interesting to compare the representation of British people and migrants in the parliamentary debates. In this type of analysis, the transitivity approach would perhaps be more fruitful, since comparison between two types of actors could more clearly reveal ideological biases. In general, I think the transitivity approach is a useful theory, since it brings forth the importance of verbs when studying the representation of different groups of people, as it also offered a useful theory for studying the verbs and processes that were associated with the different migrant groups.

In future, it would also be interesting to study the differences in the ways migrants are talked about between different parties, and also between the members of the same party. For instance, the members of the Labour Party often defended the rights of the migrants in the debates, but some of the members still used terms such as “refugee crisis” and “control”, which can create a feeling that the

situation is out of control, which again may increase hostility towards migrants. A study of the similarities and differences between the members would perhaps offer information on how unified the speeches are, and how carefully the speeches are planned. Furthermore, a diachronic study of the ways in which migrants are talked about in the parliamentary debates could show whether the style has changed over time, and whether there is a specific point in time when the number of immigrants coming to the UK started to be considered a problem.

Fully answering my first research question would require more research, perhaps even from different fields of study. However, I think my research still answers the question in part, and offers some ideas for future studies. Critically studying discourses relating to migration issues is important, because migration will not end. The situation that is now called a “crisis” will perhaps be the new “normal”, because the climate change with many other possible reasons probably just increases the need of some people to flee their homes. Humanity in treating these people is required, which is why we need to be on the alert for inequalities and biases in discourses.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Complete lists of the top 50 keywords in the Corpus A (on the left) and the Corpus B (on the right).

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Keyword	Rank	Freq	Keyness	Keyword
1	2259	3381.965	mar	1	2398	3057.201	jun
2	1634	2457.970	feb	2	3424	2422.408	scottish
3	575	840.851	ombudsman	3	3375	2124.568	scotland
4	757	525.798	lords	4	1734	1651.791	july
5	354	436.699	pubs	5	1340	1113.530	snp
6	989	436.561	mental	6	1522	1026.959	referendum
7	303	434.247	epilepsy	7	826	906.007	maiden
8	408	364.842	complaints	8	751	577.419	credits
9	635	307.029	cancer	9	863	573.379	productivity
10	279	282.528	hague	10	1165	516.668	english
11	7029	281.692	been	11	1754	468.747	speech
12	271	279.477	complaint	12	575	407.303	grayling
13	356	271.366	avoidance	13	1341	401.210	eu
14	339	256.271	code	14	1148	377.027	wage
15	2217	247.373	health	15	926	376.403	poverty
16	237	241.474	pub	16	8966	369.560	our
17	409	236.383	register	17	306	333.602	autonomy
18	665	229.197	crime	18	1397	327.815	union
19	5064	226.880	minister	19	3854	288.410	parliament
20	164	220.462	asbestos	20	379	273.085	queen
21	300	212.832	petition	21	1719	273.031	european
22	407	211.881	pension	22	264	270.990	childcare
23	710	207.078	motion	23	1218	270.471	kingdom
24	272	204.932	hmrc	24	294	268.515	salmond
25	319	193.982	ld	25	543	261.479	speeches
26	200	188.835	slavery	26	952	258.854	chris
27	1051	187.992	police	27	966	250.040	welfare
28	475	187.246	regulations	28	19257	248.499	will
29	19755	184.217	have	29	1033	241.074	devolution
30	154	182.993	hsbc	30	659	232.285	nation
31	389	178.973	guidance	31	2470	220.832	constituency
32	154	178.127	tfl	32	335	212.871	predecessor
33	211	177.453	evasion	33	333	210.847	alex
34	304	168.144	january	34	829	207.850	smith
35	143	162.735	bonuses	35	440	207.372	constitutional
36	11200	157.974	has	36	228	204.765	gracious
37	162	152.991	rotherham	37	1464	204.302	united
38	529	151.256	victims	38	580	193.808	devolved
39	574	150.642	unemployment	39	228	188.965	charles
40	200	147.671	offence	40	273	188.394	greek
41	347	145.636	b	41	1838	186.194	south
42	96	144.409	mitochondrial	42	358	178.248	sport
43	350	144.014	conduct	43	1232	176.606	vote
44	98	137.513	annuity	44	368	171.033	manifesto
45	544	134.803	person	45	203	164.671	adoption
46	303	133.215	commissioner	46	136	163.057	coasting
47	87	130.871	expulsion	47	292	162.899	franchise
48	582	127.890	cases	48	314	159.028	glasgow
49	535	127.470	practice	49	1045	157.052	living

50	255	127.170	compensation	50	1093	156.958	rights
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Appendix 2: Collocates of *immigra** in the Corpus A (on the left) and the Corpus B (on the right).

2014-15	Freq.	MI score	Collocate	2015-16	Freq.	MI score	Collocate
1	5	20.47657	uncontrolled	1	33	11.52012	illegal
2	5	19.82449	nationality	2	8	11.47573	detention
4	19	19.12246	detention	3	5	10.52012	brokenshire
5	17	18.82064	brokenshire	4	6	9.64565	asylum
6	17	17.67442	james	5	5	9.61323	controls
8	6	16.29903	promise	6	6	8.93516	enforcement
9	13	15.96547	rules	7	9	8.08272	control
10	5	15.90022	enforcement	8	6	7.91033	james
11	21	15.86246	security	9	6	7.76079	policies
12	7	15.72496	centre	10	5	7.63260	rules
13	6	15.48626	draft	11	5	7.05415	tackle
14	7	15.23797	control	12	10	6.93066	policy
15	19	14.92221	act	13	5	6.73876	recognise
16	6	14.69834	introduced	14	7	6.72015	measures
17	11	13.95586	system	15	10	6.60364	act
18	28	13.46329	minister	16	11	6.57122	system
19	8	13.17083	issue	17	5	6.03148	benefits
20	5	12.63467	uk	18	14	5.91915	bill
21	7	12.62661	under	19	6	5.83713	services
22	5	12.54330	through	20	9	5.72932	issue
23	10	12.46096	up	21	18	5.67219	minister
24	6	12.35405	into	22	11	5.65032	she
25	8	12.29888	no	23	5	5.32536	home
26	6	12.24546	being	24	5	5.25991	further
27	11	12.07270	or	25	23	5.16659	about
28	10	11.78209	our	26	8	5.07821	debate
29	10	11.47899	about	27	19	4.96594	an
30	7	11.45931	can	28	5	4.96247	through
31	72	11.44756	and	29	8	4.91974	new
32	32	11.37656	for	30	6	4.89807	into
33	8	11.32696	an	31	6	4.79902	important
34	9	11.25656	which	32	5	4.76123	labour
35	21	11.22318	on	33	20	4.71180	our
36	24	11.08337	we	34	44	4.66681	on
37	145	11.08166	the	35	5	4.53371	may
38	9	10.92995	they	36	6	4.49683	also
39	49	10.77091	of	37	5	4.41526	how
40	6	10.75559	s	38	6	4.35941	us
41	34	10.70319	in	39	16	4.35192	government
42	7	10.67247	government	40	7	4.34984	when
43	12	10.65451	are	41	5	4.33525	country
44	52	10.61666	to	42	8	4.27397	or
45	5	10.50955	there	43	5	4.22366	does
46	38	10.49850	that	44	42	4.21814	we
47	11	10.48737	be	45	5	4.16653	were
48	5	10.46275	from	46	15	4.15803	but
49	23	10.45618	is	47	14	4.14369	was
50	25	10.43397	a	48	7	4.14291	should
51	8	10.29566	this	49	6	4.06411	column
52	12	10.27703	have	50	8	4.04667	can
53	7	10.24886	with	51	11	4.01107	from

54	5	10.19563	but	52	83	4.00461	and
55	5	10.17573	was	53	5	3.94761	out
56	5	10.16369	by	54	6	3.85716	if
57	7	10.14421	as	55	7	3.81005	been
58	6	10.09575	has	56	11	3.79902	by
59	11	10.03786	it	57	15	3.78756	with
60	13	9.89441	i	58	7	3.75620	right
61	6	9.72878	will	59	74	3.73965	of
62	5	9.32936	not	60	7	3.72571	their
				61	21	3.67523	have
				62	166	3.65349	the
				63	43	3.65047	a
				64	9	3.64071	s
				65	8	3.63500	which
				66	39	3.63029	is
				67	11	3.60859	has
				68	23	3.53620	it
				69	46	3.47240	in
				70	5	3.45134	friend
				71	8	3.42209	people
				72	5	3.41447	house
				73	11	3.39529	my
				74	67	3.35218	to
				75	49	3.32213	that
				76	16	3.28703	will
				77	5	3.28506	all
				78	12	3.24061	as
				79	22	3.22050	for
				80	13	3.17753	not
				81	7	3.16713	they
				82	6	3.15653	at
				83	12	3.00335	be
				84	22	2.94902	i
				85	8	2.75183	this
				86	9	2.67611	are
				87	6	2.41727	hon

Appendix 3: Collocates of *refugee** in the Corpus A (on the left) and the Corpus B (on the right).

2014-15	Freq.	MI score	Collocate	2015-16	Freq.	MI score	Collocate
1	6	14.64007	syrian	1	13	14.03836	camps
2	5	8.96991	help	2	33	13.94935	syrian
3	5	8.67845	million	3	5	13.65985	resettlement
4	5	5.01399	have	4	6	13.12933	jordan
5	10	4.93765	in	5	5	12.75938	camp
6	11	4.73706	and	6	10	11.93738	commissioner
7	22	4.36119	the	7	6	11.37034	asylum
8	8	4.15620	of	8	8	11.07488	migrants
9	9	4.08614	to	9	7	11.00777	mediterranean
				10	13	10.60986	syria
				11	20	10.54160	crisis
				12	5	10.48992	migration
				13	10	10.13628	vulnerable
				14	8	9.82696	nations
				15	6	9.79085	thousands
				16	10	8.69946	high
				17	8	8.46673	countries
				18	5	8.44003	accept
				19	9	8.07377	million
				20	6	7.81715	since
				21	9	7.77902	children
				22	8	7.72911	united
				23	8	7.55219	number
				24	7	7.21769	world
				25	5	7.18303	help
				26	10	7.05104	support
				27	5	7.01119	whether
				28	6	6.98664	under
				29	22	6.73575	from
				30	16	6.68304	more
				31	5	6.63674	most
				32	6	6.56885	take
				33	6	6.54437	uk
				34	6	6.53918	over
				35	5	6.40120	north
				36	13	6.33054	who
				37	10	6.32059	or
				38	6	6.28432	now
				39	7	6.21848	than
				40	6	6.04759	many
				41	28	6.03823	are
				42	9	6.00906	those
				43	5	5.94835	does
				44	27	5.76249	have
				45	5	5.69869	some
				46	5	5.67875	secretary
				47	63	5.65081	in
				48	9	5.62826	there
				49	7	5.45039	their
				50	28	5.29311	for
				51	59	5.23690	and
				52	12	5.19032	with
				53	145	5.18305	the

	54	59	5.13752	of
	55	69	5.11930	to
	56	23	5.07407	we
	57	7	5.00283	s
	58	16	4.93207	on
	59	7	4.89182	they
	60	6	4.88122	at
	61	8	4.87385	has
	62	7	4.87163	by
	63	11	4.83976	as
	64	5	4.68161	which
	65	6	4.56079	but
	66	5	4.46870	people
	67	20	4.39150	is
	68	21	4.34121	a
	69	9	4.31300	be
	70	8	4.20178	not
	71	24	4.01707	that
	72	12	3.79923	i
	73	7	3.54468	it

Appendix 4: Collocates of *asylum* in the Corpus A (on the left) and the Corpus B (on the right).

2014-15	Freq.	MI score	Collocate	2015-16	Freq.	MI score	Collocate
1	10	16.71407	seekers	1	20	14.66802	seekers
2	6	11.96811	immigration	2	6	14.66802	seeker
3	6	9.01132	act	3	13	11.28100	claims
4	6	6.95030	or	4	8	11.20859	asylum
5	11	4.36771	of	5	5	10.46639	granted
6	7	4.17515	in	6	8	9.98854	claim
7	7	3.83706	and	7	6	9.64565	immigration
8	14	3.46118	the	8	10	7.58162	system
9	5	3.32457	that	9	5	6.72082	here
10	6	3.25325	to	10	5	5.70455	uk
				11	5	5.48314	country
				12	9	5.43227	those
				13	7	5.22923	or
				14	5	5.15627	than
				15	9	4.86946	from
				16	7	4.86067	who
				17	5	4.80538	should
				18	16	4.65409	are
				19	8	4.56999	people
				20	17	4.51827	have
				21	5	4.47252	been
				22	5	4.18784	an
				23	33	4.14114	in
				24	6	3.88202	has
				25	15	3.88061	we
				26	33	3.82186	and
				27	8	3.56629	be
				28	32	3.43399	to
				29	15	3.27900	a
				30	10	3.23089	for
				31	23	3.20166	of
				32	18	3.02524	that
				33	5	2.94692	not
				34	5	2.67721	on
				35	38	2.67428	the
				36	7	2.30014	is